SPRING 1998

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Siena, Series 3 and Series 5

Business world
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Better by
DESIGN

The story of palmtop innovation at Psion

PSION

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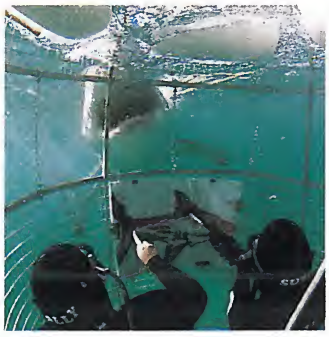

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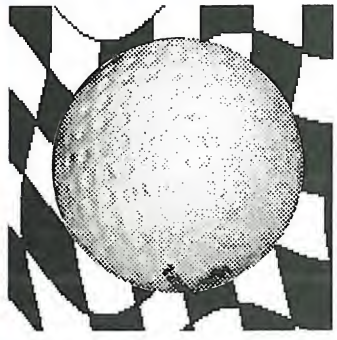

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Chairman's comment

Peer under the bonnet of a Series 5 and you'll find a virtual engine of great richness and complexity. And yet, thanks to Martin Riddiford, our design team, engineers and development staff, we have brought you a palmtop that is stylish, inexpensive and easy to use. Sales are excellent and the outlook is good, but with new technology, higher and rapidly rising volumes and greater functionality, we have not kept up with demand in service, and particularly support. I have spent time in our customer service department and fully appreciate the first class service they provide. But the average time you have to wait on the phone to have your questions answered has grown to an unacceptable level. We are taking immediate steps to reduce these delays. Among the new measures will be extra staff to deal with your queries and further customer service hotlines worldwide. We care passionately about the service we offer each of you. We will do everything we can to improve it and I give my personal assurance that support for our customer base is among our highest priorities.

David Potter, chairman, Psion plc

Editor Marc Beishon **Deputy Editor** Amy Wislocki **Art Editor** David Godfrey **Production Controller** Charlotte Brown **Production Director** Ian Sewell **Design Director** Rami Lippa **Publisher** Jules Rastelli **Publishing Director** Sue Thomas **Managing Director** Michael Potter **Editorial Director** Christopher Ward **Editorial Team for Psion** Monica Kochhar, Anthony Garvey and Paul Lubbock **Cover Photo** Douglas Fisher

PSION CONTACTS: ***UNITED KINGDOM*** Psion UK plc Tel: +44 990 143050. Fax: +44 990 561046. ***UNITED STATES*** Psion Inc Tel: +1 978 371 0310. Fax: +1 978 371 9611. ***FRANCE*** Psion France Tel: +33 1 5341 1200. Fax: +33 1 5341 1201. ***NETHERLANDS*** Psion BV Tel: +31 20 446 9444. Fax: +31 20 446 9446. ***GERMANY*** Psion GmbH Tel: +49 6172 6630. Fax: +49 6172 663 100.

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The Lotus proposition

Psion has announced a Series 5 synchronisation solution for Lotus Notes databases. It allows mobile professionals to access Notes Databases, Mail and personal information while away from the office; now, millions of Notes users can leave bulky notebook computers behind and travel light with a Series 5.

Called InSync for Lotus Notes, the first version requires PsiWin 2.1, Psion's PC docking software, and allows users to synchronise the Notes Calendar and Address Book with the Series 5. Forthcoming versions, available later this year, will take the level of integration still further.

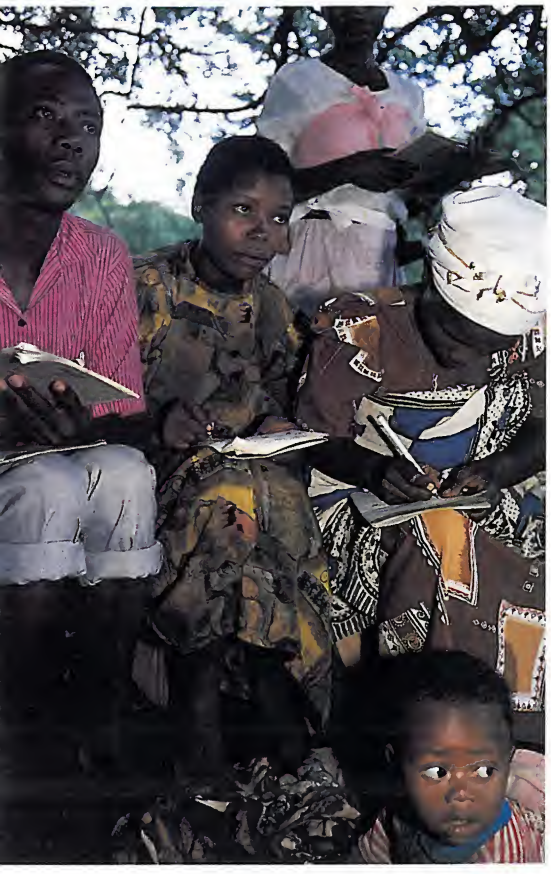
Mobile users who want to access Notes Mail while on the move can use Psion Message Suite which comes with the Series 5 (see p12 for more details). Message Suite's Web browser provides secure access to corporate information stored on a Lotus Domino server through a standard telephone line.

According to Christopher Herot, director of Mobile and Wireless Development at Lotus: 'This will help meet the growing demand by users within the Notes community who want access to information when they are away from their PC. Our goal is to make Domino the most well-connected and easily-accessed messaging and groupware platform. We are glad to see Psion's continued commitment to Lotus, adding Notes and Domino access to the existing support for Lotus Organizer 2.1, 97 and 97GS.' Daniel Doulton, product marketing manager at Psion Computers, adds: 'Access to Lotus Notes in the field has previously only been possible by investing in bulky, laptop computers. The Psion solution extends the benefits of Lotus Notes to the Series 5, so mobile users are no longer tethered to their desks. We plan to continue our groupware strategy to maintain our lead in this important market.'

Version two of InSync will allow Lotus Notes 4.5/4.6 users to synchronise their Notes Database with the Series 5's Data application. Users will be able to choose which database fields to download to the Series 5. Once on the Series 5, data can be viewed and edited using the Data application. Any changes made on either the Lotus Notes Database or to the data on the Series 5 will be replicated once the two are connected and synchronised.

Inside this year, Psion will also offer a Series 5 'client' for Lotus Notes which will offer users similar levels of data access and features to those found on a PC running Notes.

InSync for Lotus Notes is available on a CD-ROM together with a single-user licence. Volume licenses are available. Also included on this CD-ROM are PsiWin 2.1 and the Message Suite software for the Series 5. Initially, InSync is available in an English-language version.



Action in Africa: an adult literacy group in Bukwekula, Uganda

PHOTO: JENNEY MATTHEWS/ACTION AID

Project education

Psion's support for charity ActionAid is continuing to help development work in Africa. In 1996 the donation helped education work in Uganda, as reported in* Psion User, *Summer 1997. The project proved so successful that ActionAid then attracted the largest grant made to a charity by the British National Lottery Charities Board: £1 million to continue the education programme for three more years.

The latest project to benefit from Psion's help looks at two of the biggest challenges for South Africa's rural poor: literacy and land rights. ActionAid's radical approach to adult literacy is ideal for the Northern Province where up to 74% of the population cannot read or write, and 91% have no tenure over the land they work. The project will provide a case study for government and local communities, showing how people can learn to read and write, and at the same time prepare their own case for land tenure under the new Land Reform Programme.

'Psion's support for education projects in Southern Africa is most welcome,' says Jonathan Potter, head of corporate development at ActionAid, 'particularly as the company seeks no commercial benefit from its donations, – which is becoming increasingly rare these days.'
ActionAid: +44 1460 62972.

Psilver service

We know just how precious your Psion can be (some say it's worth its weight in gold). Well, the Series 3c pictured isn't gold, but silver-cased – and it's worth quite a bit, we can tell you. Just how much, you can find out from London's top jeweller, Asprey, which has this rather special piece of silverware on sale now. Call +44 171 493 6767 for details.

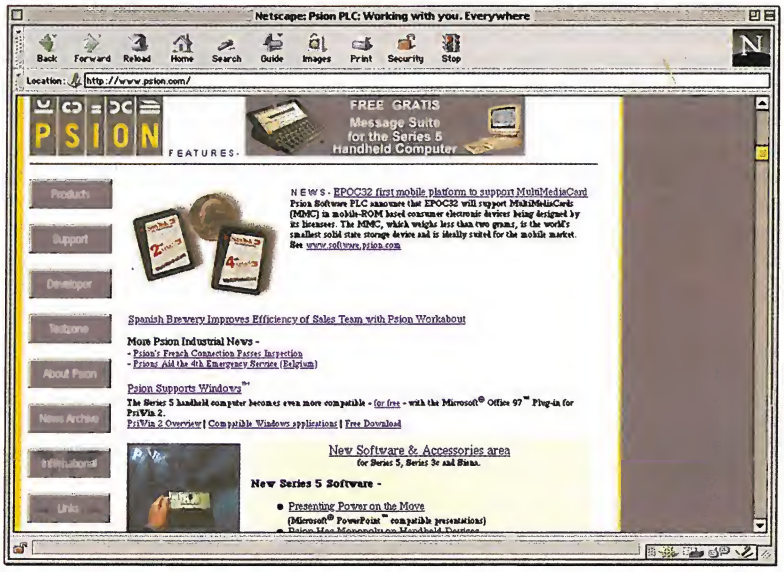
A town called Psion: only two kilometres to go to this famous place in Greece...

Sir Clive's legacy

Britons of a certain age will remember the Sinclair Spectrum, a dinky home computer dreamt up by that master of the cutting edge, Sir Clive Sinclair. While the Spectrum wasn't ideal for business use, it did spawn a massive number of games, some of which found their way on to Psion's Series 3. Now Dutch company Palmtop has released a free Spectrum emulator for the Series 5 – you can download dozens of games from the Internet (but note any copyright rules first). Palmtop: http://www.palmtop.nl

Ready for the jump-off

Olympic three-day eventer Ian Stark is using his Psion Series 5 to plan his busy schedule in the build-up to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Stark, from Selkirk in Scotland, has already represented Great Britain in Los Angeles, Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta, and is now seeking selection for the forthcoming Olympic Games in Australia.



Web site update

Psion's central Web site at **http://www.psion.com** has a wealth of news and information for Psion users. On the home page, you can see all the major Psion product and company announcements before they hit the pages of the world's computer magazines, while inside the site you'll find the following resources:

- A **software and accessories** area for the Series 5, Series 3c and Siena
- A **support** section that comprises several hundred questions and answers concerning Psion's palmtops, plus free downloads of software such as the Message Suite for the Series 5 and updates to PsiWin 2
- A **testzone** with online and downloadable demonstrations of the Series 5, Series 3 and Siena
- Links to third party suppliers and an **international** area for contact details of Psion subsidiaries and distributors worldwide

In brief

*• British Commonwealth heads of state and deputy heads of state were presented with Psion Series 5s by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair at the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting** last autumn in Edinburgh.*

*• Meanwhile Tony Blair has also cited Psion as an example of **excellence in design** in a speech about innovations for the millennium.*

*• The worldwide market for portable handheld computers is experiencing an **increase in demand**, says recent research by consultancy Frost & Sullivan. Revenues for handheld data terminals are expected to reach $1.77 billion in 2002, as more companies seek to increase efficiency through automation and decrease costs.*

*• A survey of 'favourite handhelds' in the **Czech Republic** placed the Series 3a, 3c and Series 5 in the top three slots. A Russian version of the Series 5 is now available from Psion (see letters, p6).*

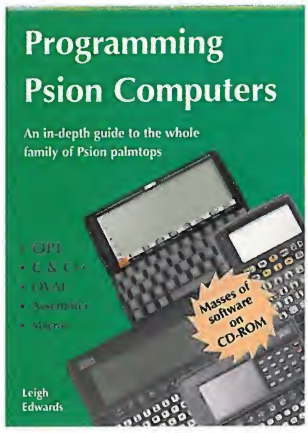
• Psion Dacom, Psion's communications specialist, has

*launched **Global Card 56K**, a multifunction PC Card modem which is compatible with standards for 56kbits/s transmission. The company has recently become a leading supplier of these modems to Dell Computers worldwide.*

*• Psion was named **European Company of the Year** in 1997 by the editors-in-chief of the European Business Press Federation at a ceremony in Athens.*

*• As reported in the Summer 1997 issue of Psion User, Novell and Psion have now joined forces to promote LinkWise, a synchronisation tool that allows Series 3a/3c and Siena users to work with Novell's **GroupWise** software. More from developer Advansys Corp at www.advansyscorp.com*

*• Bi-monthly magazine **Palmtop** has a sister journal which is published in German, and contains articles especially relevant to German Psion owners. For details, contact PSIOlogic on +49 6051 470065.*



Program generator

Software house EMCC has taken time out from its programming activities to write a book for other Psion programmers. Called* Programming Psion Computers*, the book comes with a free CD-ROM comprising many program examples and complete applications.

The book covers all the computer languages currently available for Psions – such as OPL, C and OVAL – and deals with the Series 5, as well as the rest of the Psion family. It's said to be an 'unrivalled resource for Psion programmers, whether amateur or professional'.

The book costs £29.95 (including the CD-ROM) and is available from: EMCC, 23 Summerfield Drive, Moulton, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 8PU, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 1606 861027. Web site: www.compulink.co.uk/~emcc

Psion to the mountain rescue

Some 6.5 million visitors each year visit Snowdonia, the beautiful national park in Wales, many to walk in the mountains and enjoy the clean air and rugged scenery. Although most return safely, some are unlucky enough to get lost on the mountainside, or stranded due to injury. It is these unfortunate few who rely on the services provided by the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation. OVMRO is made up of volunteers who are 'on call' to help in search operations at a moment's notice.

'A fast response time is vital if subjects are to have the highest chance of survival,' says Martin Hayes, volunteer and trainer with OVMRO. 'So we need to be able to mobilise volunteers very quickly.' The database of members stored on a Series 3a means that these important contact details are always to hand.

The machine also plays an active role in the rescue operations. 'We use a Psion to take any companions who have returned safely through a questionnaire,' says Hayes. 'This helps to establish information such as the time and location of the last sighting of those missing. But most important, perhaps, is the spreadsheet, which we use to calculate the "probability of detection". It has been proven that you can predict the actions of lost individuals by analysing the behaviour of lost persons in similar situations in the past. For example, children aged between three and six years old generally try to return home or to a familiar point. When tired, they look for shelter or somewhere comfortable to sleep. By combining such analysis with local knowledge, we can identify a specific area to search as a priority.'

OVMRO now hopes to harness the power of the Series 5. 'Just having a backlight could make all the difference,' says Hayes. 'It's tricky using a Psion by torchlight in the mountains.'

The rescue operation relies entirely on public donations, which can be sent to OVMRO, Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Gwynedd, North Wales.

PHOTO: MARTIN HAYES

Series 5 shareware bandwagon rolls on

The launch of the Series 5 has sent the already busy world of Psion shareware authors into a frenzy, as they upgrade their applications for the new machine – and write new ones.

Already, there is a huge variety of programs available for Psion's new flagship, including S5Bank, the home accounting suite; Psi-Mapper/GB, the mapping system; and InteliScrn, a freeware utility which automatically controls the backlight and screen contrast.

Shareware authors are taking advantage of new features in Psion's programming language (OPL/32) to enhance their programs significantly. The Series 5's pen, for instance, can add a new dimension to a program's interface, with toolbar buttons, 'drag and drop', and on-screen drawing.

Take Steve Litchfield's program Psi-Mapper/GB, which now enables the user to annotate an on-screen map and then print it directly from the Series 5, or fax it to someone else. The program is much faster than the Series 3c version at redrawing the screen, allowing more detailed data and more ambitious features.

Though most Series 5 users won't realise it, Psion has put major improvements into OPL/32, and the shareware community has received the Psion Series 5 with open arms.

For Series 3 and Siena shareware updates, see p24 and p26.

Word perfect

Psion's Scrabble software makes an ideal Christmas or birthday gift. But it has a much more important role to play for the 12 members of the UK and Eire Scrabble team. Each player has a Psion Series 3a, and used the program to help train for the 1997 World Scrabble Championships, held in Washington DC, US, at the end of November.

Philip Nelkon, team co-ordinator, says that the Psion version of the game is the most advanced Scrabble software available. 'The Psion can play at a similar level to the top world players – or even slightly better,' he says. 'It also enables players to ask for advice on any particular board situation, an invaluable feature that the PC version doesn't offer.' The team also used customised software, developed with Psion's help, to familiarise themselves with the two dictionaries valid in the competition.

PHOTOS: GREG WILLIAMS, REX FEATURES

A close encounter

When artists Olly Williams and Suzi Winstanley decided to paint great white sharks, they didn't work from photos in the comfort of their London studio. They flew to Cape Town, South Africa, and spent a week underwater in a steel cage, painting the razor-toothed predators at close quarters.

Olly & Suzi, as they're known in the art world, are both divers and devised a way to draw underwater using graphite pencils on divers' slates. During their time below sea level they saw more than 30 sharks, many of them over five metres in length and two tonnes in weight. 'They would often inspect us,' says Ollie, 'and we were thrilled to see them attack and bite the paintings.' In one of these attacks, a shark took a large chunk out of a painting of itself.

Olly & Suzi work simultaneously on the same pictures, swapping brushes or pencils and crossing hands over each other. They specialise in painting endangered predators, and work in close proximity to their subject matter. They have already worked with African wild dogs and polar bears.

They travel the world in the course of their work, and have used a Psion Series 3a since 1994 to help organise their trips. Now they have two Series 5s, together with a PC Card Modem Adaptor and comms software. 'We spend about eight months each year deep in the bush,' explains Olly, 'and constantly need to communicate with art dealers, galleries and sponsors. Now we use the Series 5 linked to a GSM mobile phone, where there is a signal.'

Olly & Suzi's work can be seen at Blains Fine Art Gallery in London, in spring 1998. Call +44 171 495 5050 for details.

A strong business case

Radio news journalist Guy Monson thought it would be easy to find a tough plastic case for the Psion Series 3a that he always carries when out on assignment. 'I throw my Psion into my rucksack, along with the bulky tape recorder I use to record interviews,' explains Monson. 'As you can imagine, it can take quite a bashing, so I decided to buy a hard case which would withstand the knocks without complaint.'

However, after weeks of fruitless searching, Monson concluded that no such product existed. Instead of giving up like most people probably would, he decided to set up a company to manufacture and sell plastic hard cases for the Series 3 range and Series 5.

Now available to Psion users worldwide, the Palm-Tec cases come in a matt-black finish and have a black-covered, foam-lined interior.

Palm-Tec, tel: +44 1342 317416; email: palmtec@aol.com

Get snapping

It's competition time again – but this issue we're making things a little harder for you by asking you to send us photographs of your Psion in interesting or unusual situations. All we ask is that the Psion is clearly visible in the picture – and that we'll find the composition practical, wacky or just funny.

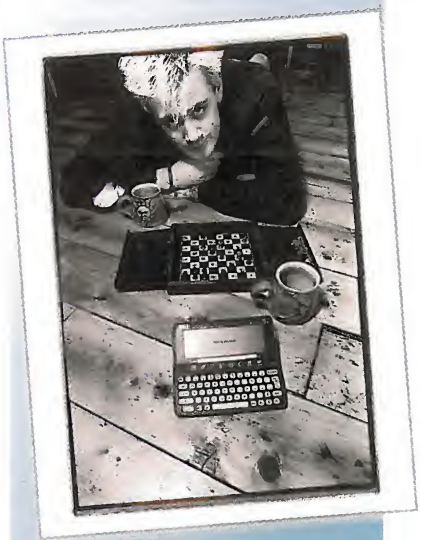
You don't have to be a top photographer, of course, but do make sure your picture is as clear as you can make it. You can opt for colour or black and white, and we can accept prints, transparencies and – this being a hi-tech age – images sent via the Internet.

The sender of the best photograph will receive a Series 5, and the runner-up wins a Series 3c. Third prize is a Siena.

Send your pictures to: Psion Photo Competition, Redwood Publishing, 12-26 Lexington Street, London W1R 4HQ, United Kingdom. Or email your image to us at: psionuser@psionworld.net Closing date: 1 June 1998. One entry per person, please. We regret we are unable to return your photographs.

Congratulations to the three lucky winners of our competition in the Summer 1997 issue. The following readers all wrote in with the correct answers (B C A) and each won a new Series 5:

Mr J Kirkup, Dorchester, UK
Ms S Brisbois, Littleton, US
Mr F Janson, Hanoi, Vietnam



Readers' response

Send us your Psion adventures, hints and tips, or problems, by letter, email or fax

Emergency aid

'Leave it in the car – it will be safest there.' That was the advice of my fellow climbers. But I just couldn't bring myself to be parted from my Psion Siena. So up it came on the climb, packed into my rucksack. The rock climb on Ben Nevis started perfectly, in fine weather.

Then it happened: a rock that my husband stepped on slid from underneath him, and sent him flying through the air, crashing past me. The rock caught my leg with a glancing blow, and threw me off the ledge. With a mixture of relief and surprise we stopped falling – our rope had held, preventing us from falling 900 feet into the gully below. My leg was broken, but we managed to sit down while somebody on the summit plateau called for help on his mobile phone.

Now was my chance. I hastily looked inside my rucksack and retrieved the Siena – it was still in one piece; what's more, it worked. The helicopter rescue was fast and efficient, and within two hours of the accident we were in the capable hands of the hospital staff in Fort William.

My Siena proved to be invaluable from this point on. Addresses, phone numbers and insurance details were all at hand, and we could even keep a permanent record of events in the Psion's Agenda.

Thank goodness I couldn't bear to be parted from my Siena.
Deborah Sumby
Hertford, UK

Messages in hand

I regularly travel in Europe and need to be available for my international business contacts. My Nokia 2110 GSM mobile phone is essential for this purpose, but inevitably it is switched off on occasion – while I am in meetings or on a flight, for example.

It is at times like this that I find SMS (Short Message Service) invaluable. I can send and receive messages wherever I am, and even use it while in the office; people have learned that it is a very practical way to communicate, especially when it can be done from a standard email system.

Typing on the mobile phone directly is tricky, and it is much better to use the Psion with SMS messaging software. You can use SMS services with the Psion in many ways – the only limit is your creativity.
Gunnar Hellman
Stockholm, Sweden

Golfer's friend

I thought you'd enjoy this note I read in a British newspaper about the qualities needed by a golf caddy: 'To be a caddy requires the golfing brains of Jack Nicklaus, a thick skin, the psychological sophistication of a £500-an-hour shrink, low cunning, the motivational powers of a five-star general, a robust constitution, the organisational skills of a Psion 3a, loyalty, guile...'
Peter Drummond
Airdrie, Scotland

Upgrade gripe

Why could you not have made the Psion Series 5 backward compatible? I have invested considerable sums of money in a 2MB Series 3a, printer cable, PsiWin software and fax facility – all of which will be useless if I upgrade to a Series 5.
Martin Watson
Via the Internet

As the Series 5 has the new 32-bit EPOC32 'platform' it is not possible to run Series 3 programs on a Series 5. But PsiWin 2, a PC cable and fax software are bundled free with the Series 5. PsiWin 2 also offers conversion for your 3a files. See articles on p12 and p14 for more.

Scandinavian 3c?

Are there any plans to introduce a Series 3c with a Finnish/Swedish keyboard layout (ie, with the vowels ÄäÖöÅå in their proper places)?
Tapio Väisänen
Helsinki, Finland

A Series 3c with Finnish/Swedish keyboard is now available. Contact your local Psion distributor for details and pricing.

Series 5 and Mac

When will PsiMac be available for the Series 5? And will it support printing via the Mac?
Andy Bruce
Via the Internet

A Mac connectivity product for the Series 5, Psion MacConnect, is now on sale. It supports backup and file management, but not printing.

Copyright wrong

In the *Wares and Hows* feature in your last issue, you state: 'As a rule of thumb, works are out of copyright 50 years after the author's death.'

ILLUSTRATION: SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Books such as *The Time Machine* by HG Wells are indeed out of copyright and freely available on US Web sites, but anyone distributing HG Wells in electronic form in Europe will be breaking EC and UK law (whereby copyright expires 70 years after the author's death). Until we have time travelled forward to 2016 that is...
Professor Edward James
Reading, UK

More memory

How do I go about upgrading my Psion Series 3a (256KB)?
Barrie Weston
Durham, UK
Memory upgrades are available for Series 3 (128KB to 256KB), Series 3a (256KB to 512KB), and Series 3a (1MB to 2MB). You need to send the machine to a Psion service centre.

Fixed fonts

Do the systems on the Series 3a and Series 5 allow the installation of different fonts? I am particularly interested to know whether Tambo Russian or an equivalent can be installed for typing the Cyrillic alphabet, as I would like to use the Series 3a or Series 5 for writing Russian letters.
Jacob Rueegg
Waedenswil, Switzerland
Your screen display is controlled by the Psion's permanent memory (or ROM). For this reason, it's very difficult to load and use fonts on your Psion, as this would require quite detailed programming knowledge. However, you can buy a Psion Series 3a with Russian keyboard from Psion's Russian distributor JK Solutions, tel: +44 171 287 1460.

Can I scan?

Is it possible to store scanned images on the Psion Series 5 and cut and paste them into documents?
Patrick Ellwood
Via the Internet
Scanned images are bitmaps on the PC, and these can be converted to Psion format using the converters supplied in the Extras folder on the PsiWin 2 CD. PsiWin 2.1 offers 'drag and drop' conversion of PC bitmaps and Psion pic files.

Downhill pskiing

As a member of the British Freestyle Ski team which competed in the Winter Olympics, my Psion Series 3c always travels with me.

Every week during the winter, the World Cup Tour moves to another country, so the World function comes in handy. I record all training and competitions in Sheet, and use Agenda for weight training and competition schedules, and flight details. Word stores my letters and work with the sports psychologist.

And it doesn't add much weight to the eight pairs of skis I have to travel with...
Sean Curtis
Via the Internet

Readers can write to Psion User magazine at 12-26 Lexington Street, London W1R 4HQ, UK. Fax: +44 171 312 2601. Or send email to: psionuser@psionworld.net We regret that we are unable to reply to all letters individually. Letters will be edited for meaning and length. See the Contents page for details of the main Psion offices.

Q&As

Below we answer your questions about the Psion Series 3a/3c and Series 5. For more answers, visit Psion's Web site at: http://www.psion.com

Why is the new machine called Series 5, and not Series 4?
In some eastern cultures, where Psion expects high sales, four is considered an unlucky number.

Is the Series 5 compatible with Windows?
Yes. Series 5 comes with its own PC docking solution, PsiWin 2, which adds a 'My Psion' icon to your Windows 95 or NT desktop, and enables you to work with your documents whichever computer they are stored on. The Series 3c is compatible with Windows 3.x. See p14 for more details on PC connectivity.

What is EPOC32?
EPOC32 is a 32-bit operating system which includes a full suite of productivity and personal information management applications. The platform, which is written entirely in the C++ computer language, is extremely modular and supports embedded graphics and voice, as well as pen and keyboard input. EPOC32 is produced by Psion Software and is being licensed to other manufacturers outside the Psion Group, such as Philips.

What type of expansion slot does the Series 5 have?
An industry-standard CompactFlash slot which accepts Psion Memory Disks. These disks require minimal power, and are available in three sizes: 2MB, 4MB and 10MB, although the standard is projected to reach 100MB by the year 2000.

What happens if I lose the pen?
Replacement packs can be bought from your nearest Psion distributor.

How can I move my information from a Series 3c, 3a or Siena to a Series 5?
PsiWin 2 includes a 'data upgrade' option. So you'll need access to a PC, and if you have a Series 3a you'll also need the 3Link cable. With this, you can easily transfer your current information onto your Series 5.

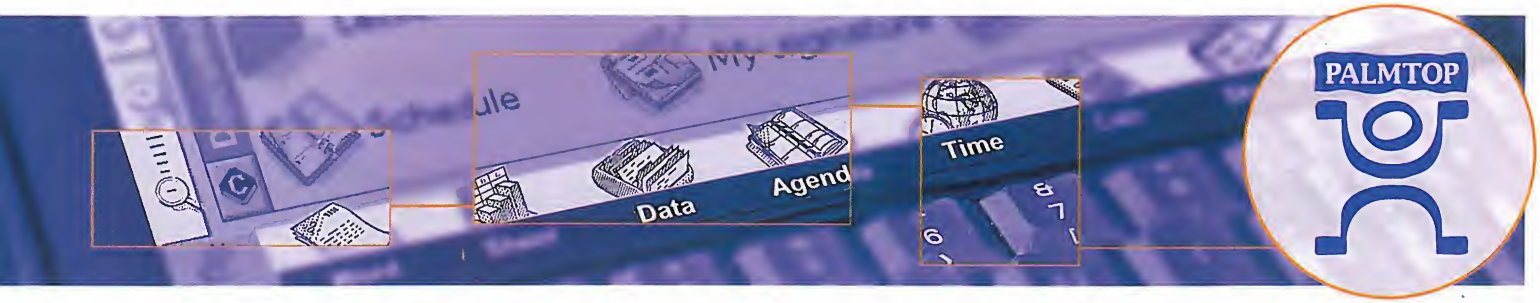
Can I upgrade my Series 3a to a Series 3c?
No, because this would involve replacing the circuit board, the casing, and possibly the screen too. Supplying just the new version of the software is also impractical as this would have to be loaded into RAM and would be far too memory-hungry.

I've forgotten my machine's password, can anything be done?
No. The system password is very secure: the only way to clear a system password is to hard-reset the machine, which deletes all the information stored in the Internal memory. If you have a backup of your information, you will be able to restore the data after the hard-reset; if you don't, all your data will be lost. (See p22 for backup options.)

How can I maximise battery life?
By minimising the amount of time you play digital sound, use the remote link or infrared, and save or copy information to storage disks.

How is memory used?
The built-in applications – such as Data, Word and so on – do not use any RAM unless they are in use. The Psion uses some memory for general operation (typically 40KB on a Series 3, 80-105KB on a Series 3a/3c and Siena, and 600KB on the Series 5), plus a little memory for each open application. Memory is also used by files and additional applications saved to the Internal disk.

How much sound fits on a Series 5?
You can record roughly two minutes of sound per MB of memory using 'best quality' compression. If you use ADPCM (Adaptive Differential Pulse Code Modulation) compression you can record four minutes per MB.



Designers of smart software

for your Psion Series 5

Route Planner

accurate and easy to use

PALMTOP ***Route Planner***

Your personal navigator (with GPS support). There's no excuse for ever getting lost again with Route Planner. In addition to getting to your destination as quickly as possible, GPS owners can use the program as a 'moving map'! Two versions are available: North America, including Canada and Mexico, and Europe including 23 different maps at the highest level of detail.

"It's worth upgrading to a series 5 simply to be able to run Route Planner, it really is that good." (Palmtop Magazine)

"When tested against known best routes, Route Planner came up trumps." (Mobile World)

new

Money

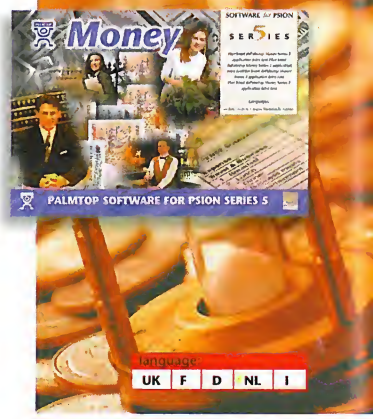
your personal finance manager

PALMTOP ***Money***

Money makes it easy to manage your finances. 60,000 people have already discovered exactly how easy. It allows you to enter transactions on the spot, to predict your bank and credit card statements and to budget your expenses. It always tells you your exact financial situation and forecasts what it will be in the future. It will keep track of money you've lent and borrowed. In fact, it will keep track of just about everything.

Palmtop Money will be available summer '98.

More than 60.000 Series 3 users are relying on Money to manage their finances!



Expense Manager

keep track of your business expenses

PALMTOP ***Expense Manager***

The ideal tool for people who travel regularly and have to keep track of their business expenses for reimbursement. Easy to use and highly configurable to the specific needs of you or your company. It contains two companion applications, one for your palmtop computer and one for your PC.

"Expense Manager is a remarkably comprehensive tool, and something with this level of functionality wouldn't be out of place on a full-blown desktop computer." (Palmtop Magazine)

Collins Dictionaries

widely acclaimed for their excellence

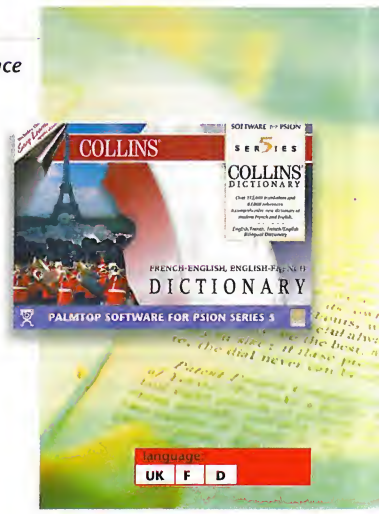
PALMTOP ***Collins Dictionaries***

Master French and German like a native with Collins© Dictionaries. Collins Dictionaries are widely acclaimed for their excellence, their continuing innovation and for their tireless reflection of today's language. Includes two dictionaries: the Collins Paperback Edition and the Collins Easy Learning.

It is available in:

- French/English-English/French.
- German/English-English/German.

Over 100.000 translations and 70.000 references!



For detailed information about the complete range of products and availability please contact your local dealer:

Psion U.K. Plc.
Tel: + 44 (0) 990.143.050
Fax: + 44 (0) 990.561.046
E-mail: uk-support@psion.com
United Kingdom

Widget Software Ltd
Tel: + 44 (0) 1438.815.444
Fax: + 44 (0) 1438.815.222
E-mail: info@widget.co.uk
United Kingdom

Psion Inc.
Tel: + 1 978.371.0310
Fax: + 1 978.371.9611
E-mail: usa-support@psion.com
USA

New World Technologies
Tel: + 1 212.941.4633
Fax: + 1 212.274.8527
E-mail: Psion@nwt.com
USA

Also available from Palmtop:

- *Financial Calculator*
- *Sound Master*
- *The Portable Chef*
- *The Holy Bible*

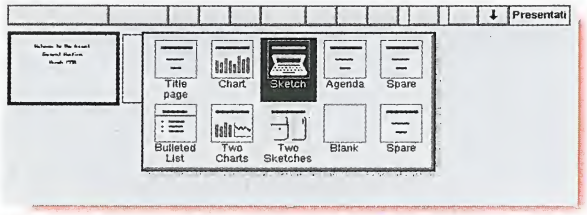
PALMTOP B.V.
Zandsteen 54
2132 MR Hoofddorp
The Netherlands
Email: Info@palmtop.nl
Web: www.palmtop.nl

Distributors:

Palmtop, designers of smart software.

Winning *presentations*

Creating business presentations can be a time-consuming task, but it's now been made easier by the launch of Presentation Maker. This allows you to create a custom-built 'slide show' that highlights the power and flexibility of the Series 5



Slide selection: you can choose from a number of templates for shaping your presentation

Plan of action: choosing the Bulleted list option allows a quick and easy way of summarising information

Picture the scene: you're on the way to a meeting where your boss is due to give a presentation to an important client. Your mobile phone rings: it's your boss, saying he's left his handouts at home, and can you help? No problem, you reply, because you have a Series 5 loaded with Psion's *Presentation Maker*, a neat piece of software that allows you to prepare a perfectly serviceable presentation – given that the client will allow you the use of a printer when you reach your destination.

It goes without saying that you already have the key facts and data on your Series 5 to put into *Presentation Maker*. You may also have exported the framework of a previous Microsoft PowerPoint presentation to your Series 5 so that you have house-style formatting at your fingertips. You stop at the next motorway service station and begin to rescue your boss from embarrassment.

The package is very easy to use, with emphasis on the use of predefined templates and styles, either imported from a PC or chosen from a selection of 'slide' layouts that come with the software. Let's say you're starting from scratch: using the pen, you choose the *New slide* button from the selection on the right-hand side of the screen. You are given a choice of 10 different slide options for making up the various pages of your presentation; these include a *Title page*, a *Bulleted list*, and an *Agenda*.

These slide types allow you to create rapidly a number of pages with the required mix of text and graphics. You can work especially quickly if you already have to hand the words and data you need, as you can import 'objects' into *Presentation Maker* from other Series 5 applications such as Word, Sketch or Sheet.

So if there are some key paragraphs in a longer document held in Word, you can import them directly to one slide; likewise, sales figures can be turned into a pie chart using Sheet, and imported to a slide which may or may not also contain text.

You use the pen to select and size the area where you want text and graphics to appear. Let's say you want to introduce a bold heading above a pie chart you've just imported to a new slide. From the main menu, select *Text* from the *Insert* option. On the slide on-screen you see a 'crosshairs' icon, which you can then move with the pen to the position you want. When you take the pen away, you see a text box, in which you can type your heading. You can then apply the usual style choices to the text, such as font, size, underline and bold. You can also lengthen the size of the text box to fit in more text – and then centre it perfectly above your pie chart.

Using the predefined templates couldn't be easier – you simply overtype the dummy text in the Bulleted list, for example. You can keep things very simple by using the templates – or jazz things up by importing pictures from other applications, and clipart such as your company logo.

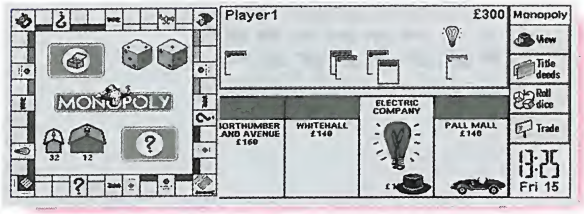
There are three views in *Presentation Maker*. *Slide* shows a view of an individual slide; *Outline* shows the presentation in text form (enabling editing, and the creation of new slides); and *Multi-slide* shows a mini-view of the presentation with text and graphics in place. Import options include slides created with PowerPoint, including pictures, as well as text. It is also possible to export the presentation in PowerPoint format.

Presentation Maker is available in English, with German, French and Dutch versions to follow later this year.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDY MARTIN

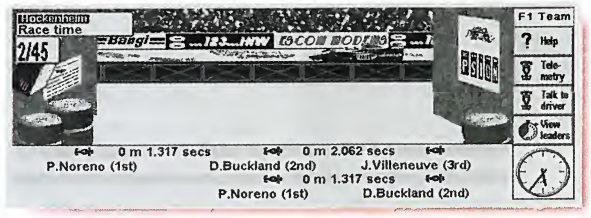
Game, *set & match*

Whether it's collecting sets of streets in Monopoly, or embarking on a gruelling season of Grand Prix racing, there's a Series 5 game here for you. As for 'matching', we've squeezed in a mention of a language word cruncher too



Hat's off: everything you need to know about the state of play is on-screen in Series 5 Monopoly

Slice of the action: the skill in Golf lies in getting your timing right for the shot by using the Psion's pen



Pole position: taking your Psion team to the Formula One championship requires a slick operator

The Psion world has always had an element of fun – just look at the variety of games available for the Series 3 (and the number of executives who like to relax on the plane with a game of patience or backgammon). It's clear that Series 5 users can expect the same wide choice, with packages such as *Monopoly* and a *Games Arcade* already available for the new machine.

Monopoly is a fully featured Psion version of the acquisitive board game. It makes good use of the Series 5's large display and pen interface, as well as its capability for animation. You can see all the main details you need on one screen – the full board, the part of the board where the action is and the holdings of the player whose turn it is. When you choose the Roll dice button, you really do see the dice roll across the board. *Monopoly* is packed full of options and features, and takes the handheld version of this game several steps on from the already remarkable Series 3 implementation.

A package that falls under the 'leisure' banner is *Berlitz Phrasebook*. The Series 5 version allows you look up more than 2,800 phrases across a range of 'source' and 'target' languages. In total, 13 languages are available: English, French, Danish, German, Hungarian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Swedish and Dutch. So 'takk, det var meget goat' (oh, that's Norwegian for 'we enjoyed it, thank you').

The *Psion Games Arcade* has five games: *Golf*, *Team Psion*, *TacTile*, *Stigma5* and *Bomz5*. Take *Golf* as a tee off. The graphics are impressive, with views that show the fairway ahead, an overhead view – and how the ball 'lies'. Apart from selecting the club and direction for each shot, skill comes into play with the swing – you tap the screen with the pen to control the speed of the shot. You'll need to do better than we did to play on the Psion tour this year.

Team Psion is a complete Grand Prix racing car game: you get to race an entire season over the same tracks used by Williams, Ferrari and the other top teams. That's 17 races in all – and you play the manager of a new team whose primary sponsor is Psion. You control your drivers, set up the cars for each circuit, handle the finances – everything you'd have to do down there in the pit lane for real. If you manage all this, you're in with a good chance of landing the Drivers' and Constructors' Championships. As the game's author says: 'Good luck – you'll need it.'

Tactile is a game of intrigue – 'simply' flatten out the tiles in the least number of moves, with 32 levels to play. *Stigma5* is an old favourite, updated with new levels and pen control, as is *Bomz5*, which has many new features.

Monopoly can be configured with English, French, German, Dutch and American boards. The Games Arcade programs are in English. Berlitz Phrasebook is suitable for English, French, German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish versions of the Series 5. For more details, contact your local retailer.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDY MARTIN

On the **write** track

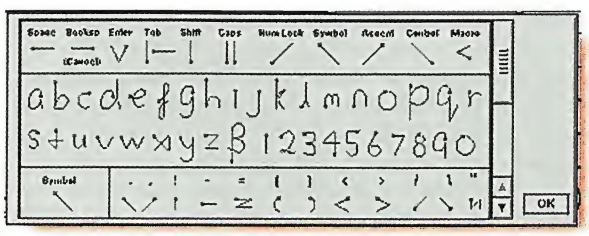
If you have the urge to write by hand now and again, instead of using a keyboard, Allegro is just the application for you. Now you can see your writing turned into text on the Series 5 before your eyes. Plus a round-up of other new software

One of the first questions people ask when they see the Series 5 touch-screen and pen in action is: 'Can you write with it?' It's not that they are lazy, or can't type – it's just nice to have the choice. The writing option is indeed now available with *Allegro* from Purple Software, an application that recognises characters you write on the screen and turns them into text as if you'd typed them on the keyboard.

The beauty of the *Allegro* programme is that you can use it for any Series 5 application where you enter letters, numbers and even accents and symbols. Once you have installed *Allegro*, you can start it at any time, whereupon it opens a window in your current application.

Using the window – which you can size to suit what you are doing – you simply use the Series 5 pen to write a character in the window. Once you lift the pen away, the character appears in the application, wherever the cursor is. You then write another character, and so on, until you have completed your text entry – it could be a database entry, a diary item, or a letter you are writing using Word.

You need to learn how to write characters so that *Allegro* recognises them – this doesn't take long to do. You have to keep in mind that to recognise what you write, the pen has to stay in contact with the screen until the character is complete. A help screen shows how to write letters, numbers, accents and symbols, while a menu allows you to turn the program into 'caps' only, 'num lock' for number entry, and so on. And in case you're wondering, *Allegro* works as fast as you can write. It's available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish versions.



Help at hand: Allegro's help screen shows you how to write characters. The dot indicates the starting point

Software in brief

P-plus Bridge (English only) from Breva Software is a Series 5 version of a successful PC bridge program called ***Q-plus***, which has done rather well in competition with human players. Any bridge fan will tell you how addictive the game is – and how arguments can flare up between partners. Here's a chance to practise on the quiet.

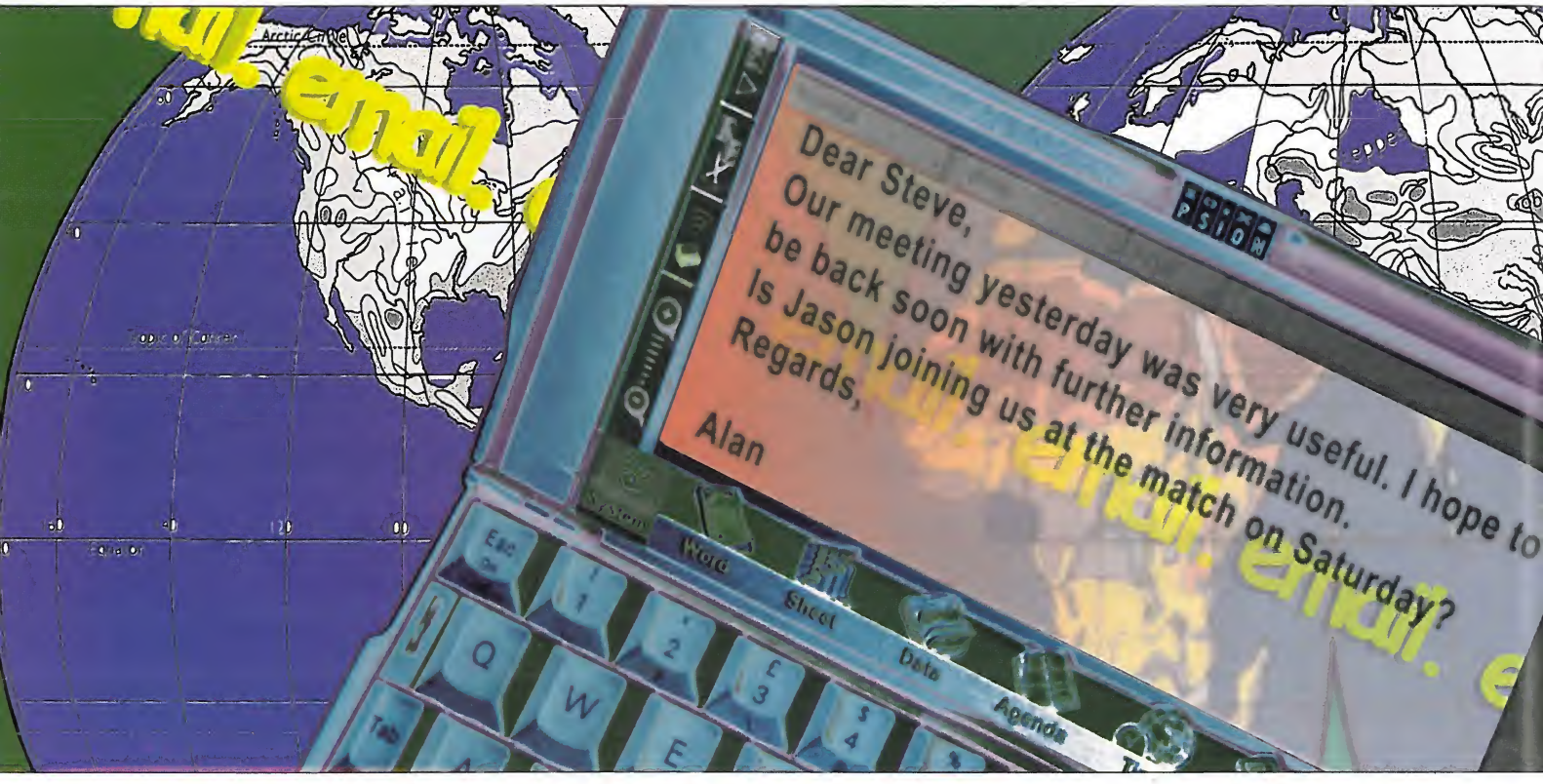
Dutch company Palmtop has several new titles for the Series 5, including the ***Route Planner*** route finder software, available also for the Series 3 (see p23). Other software includes ***Collins French/English*** and ***German/English*** dictionaries; ***Expense Manager***, an expense tracking package; and ***Portable Chef*** – your intelligent recipe book. ***Portable Chef*** allows you to type in a list of ingredients and see what recipe ideas pop up – you can even specify the number of people coming to dinner, and add recipes of your own. There are databases for cocktails, diabetics and vegetarians as well. Palmtop's products are available in various languages through Psion distributors.

Finally, On-board Info's ***Travel Companions*** (English only) provide extensive guides to European and US cities, including tips on how to get the best out of your stay.

Breva Software tel: +44 161 764 6800 **On-Board Info** tel: +44 171 370 0307; http://www.on-board-info.com **Palmtop** fax: +31 20 446 9496; http://www.palmtop.nl **Purple** tel: +44 171 387 7777; http://www.purplesoft.com

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID WHYTE

Comms station

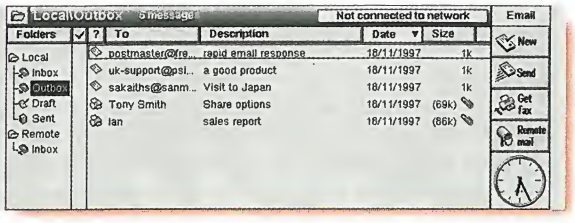


When Psion launched the Series 5, it signalled its intent to ensure the new model would be the best 'connected' handheld on the market. Message Suite has email, fax and Web browsing capability – and the package won't cost you anything

Communicating on the move is a key part of Psion's strategy for its handheld computers, and one that's been comprehensively filled for the Series 5 with the launch of free software. *Message Suite* has all you need to send and receive both faxes and electronic mail – and it also has a browser to 'surf' the Internet's Web sites.

Installation

Message Suite can be obtained directly from Psion's main Web site (http://www.psion.com), assuming you have an Internet connection from a desktop machine. If this is a problem, many dealers and the 3-Lib shareware library (see also p24) will be happy to help you get up and running. Installation requires a Windows 95 PC using *PsiWin 2*. But before you do anything else, stop and ask yourself whether you've ever used Psion's *EasyFax*, which has been replaced by *Message Suite*. If you have, you'll need to remove all of the files it uses, as *EasyFax* and *Message Suite* are not compatible. A document supplied with *Message Suite* tells you what to do.



Outward bound: email messages can be composed offline and stored in a local Outbox for sending later

Normal installation from a Windows 95 PC is as simple as clicking a mouse button, and requires about 1.6MB disk space on the Series 5. The process not only installs both the email and Web browser – which appear as *Message* and *Web* in your 'Extras' pop up selection – but also upgrades the Series 5's control panel with two new options, 'Modems' and 'Network'.

The Network control panel is where you set up details of your Internet service provider so that the Series 5 knows who to call. Most Internet providers are suitable, and Psion supplies ready made set-ups for services such as

ILLUSTRATIONS: DAVID WHYTE

FREE SOFTWARE
Download from
http://www.psion.com

PsionWorld. Signing up with one of these makes life easier; otherwise, you will have to spend a little time configuring Network. The Modem control panel allows you to select your communications hardware (see box).

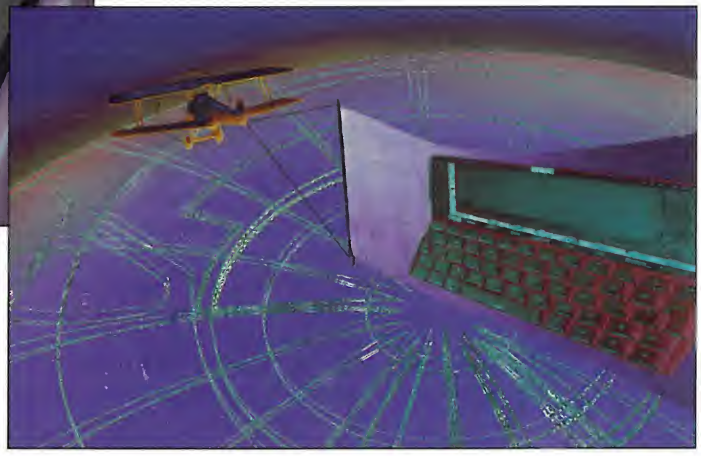
It's also well worth having a look through the comprehensive manual, which is supplied in Acrobat format and needs to be viewed on a PC using Acrobat Reader, a free product that can be obtained from Adobe's Web site (http://www.adobe.com) or from many magazine CD-ROMs.

Email essentials

If all has gone well, you're now ready to roll. Start up *Message* and, when the main screen comes up, go straight to 'Tools' from the main menu and choose 'Settings' and 'Email'. Here, you enter your email username and password, plus the mail server name of your Internet service provider. You need to enter details in both the Incoming and Outgoing dialogues.

Back on the main screen, note the Folders browser on the left. At this stage you're not actually 'online'; typically, you would read existing messages in your local 'Inbox' and compose replies in your 'Outbox', ready for sending later. This way, you minimise the time you spend online; you can read and reply to messages anywhere you and your Series 5 happen to be. You can check the spelling of your messages and address them to anyone on the Internet. (*Message Suite* also allows you to select email and fax addresses from a 'history' list, for quick addressing.)

When you're ready to send an email, and the Series 5 is connected to your modem, choose 'Send from Outbox' and off the messages go. While online, you can also open your remote Inbox and see what's arrived. You then use the toolbar buttons to move or copy messages to your local Inbox, to read at your leisure.



Fast fax

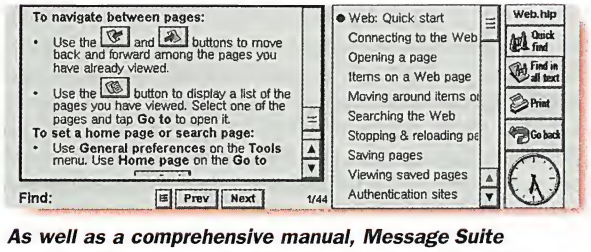
Receiving or sending faxes is even easier. The Series 5 already knows about your modem (from the Control Panel), so simply selecting 'Receive fax' works straightaway. To send a fax, choose the menu option 'Create new fax' or select the 'Print to fax' option within an application – say for a document you've created using Word. The fax is stored in your Outbox, ready for sending.

On the Web

Of course, the glamourous part of the Internet is the World Wide Web – and the *Web* option in *Message Suite* allows you to surf in style. You can view any standard Web page in the same way as you would on a desktop PC. To make viewing easier, you can zoom in and out of wide Web pages so you don't have to scroll around the screen. You can download files to your Series 5, and also save Web pages, either while on-line, or copy pages you've already saved on your PC. A good way to start on the Web is to use the built-in 'Search page' menu option. This connects you automatically to a special search engine on Psion's Web site where you can type in 'keywords'. Chances are that the engine will find you plenty of links to follow.

What are you doing with your Series 5? Send an email to psionuser@psionworld.net and let us know.

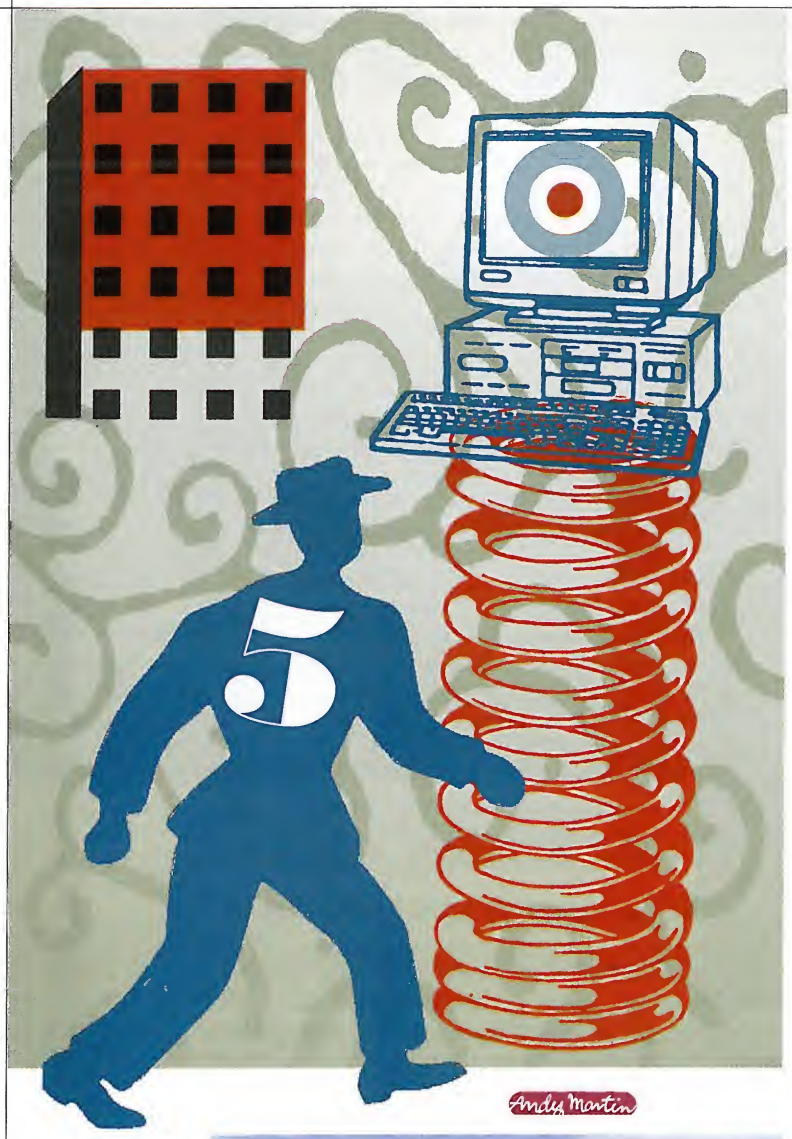
The Web browser allows you to view the standard text and images you are used to seeing on your desktop PC



As well as a comprehensive manual, Message Suite comes with on-screen help for email, fax and the Web

There are a number of ways to link your Series 5 to Message Suite. Psion's Travel Modem is a self-contained unit that works without fuss with the Series 5 (and Series 3c). The PC Card Modem Adaptor allows a range of fast PC Card modems to be used with both land lines and mobile phones. In some countries, you can use the Ericsson GS18 mobile phone, which does not require a modem. You can also use a desktop modem with an optional null modem adaptor.

Office moves



Psion has included full PC connectivity with the Series 5 that allows you to set up a mobile 'extension' to your desktop. Bryan Betts shows how PsiWin 2 gives you freedom to work away from the office

As a Psion user you already know how useful it is to have your diary and address book in your pocket, ready for action. Some Series 3a/3c users are also carrying out regular Agenda synchronisation and data exchange with desktop PCs.

The Series 5 takes this one step further, providing a complete mobile extension of your desktop PC via PsiWin 2. This means that wherever you go, you can also work on current projects using fully interchangeable spreadsheet and word processor files.

Until now, the 'mobile office' has inevitably required a heavy notebook computer with a tendency to suffer from a flat battery at crucial moments. Now, with the Series 5, you can have a mobile office that fits in your pocket, is ready to go anywhere, and runs for weeks rather than hours on one set of batteries.

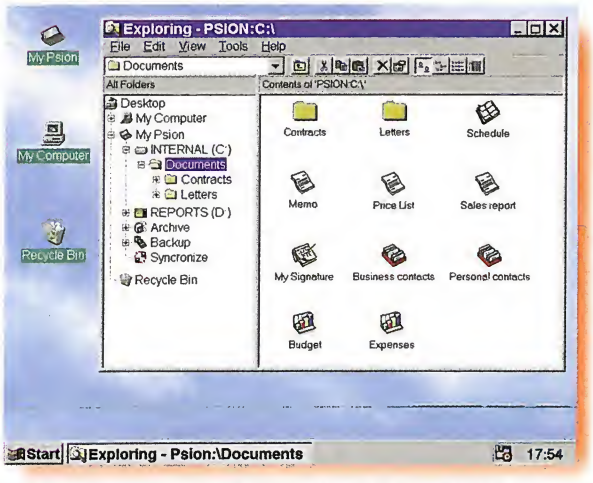
What makes the Series 5 unique is the fact that it can do almost all the things that a notebook PC can do. Psion has designed it from the roots up to include office-type applications that provide the functionality of a PC. For example, the Series 5's word processor is fully graphical, with the ability to embed pictures and use multiple fonts that appear on screen exactly as they will print.

A seamless link

PsiWin 2 is the key to the mobile office, providing a smooth interface with standard office PC systems. With *PsiWin 2*, you can keep your PC diary and contacts fully synchronised with your Series 5's Agenda and contacts files, backup your Series 5 data – and copy and translate live project files between the two systems.

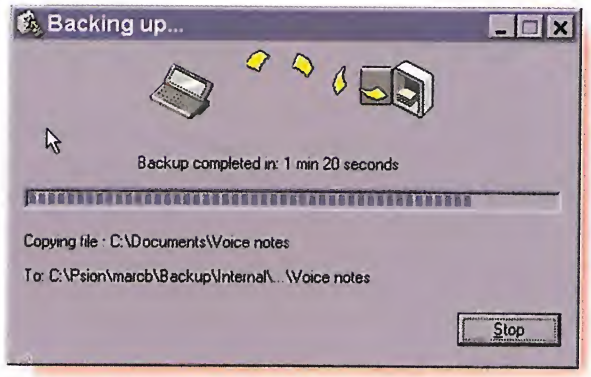
What's different about *PsiWin 2* is that it isn't a separate program. It actually extends Windows 95/NT4, allowing the Psion to be an integral part of Explorer, and ensures the PC and Series 5 are seamlessly compatible. Once you have linked the Series 5 to your computer, Windows Explorer 'senses' your Psion automatically, treating it like any other storage device. It even sets the link speed automatically, so you don't have to worry about setting up the serial ports.

The Series 5 then appears on the desktop and in Windows Explorer as a 'My Psion' icon, with all the usual Explorer drag-and-drop functions available. The files and folders on the Series 5 are managed like those on the PC itself, with a mouse click opening a context-sensitive menu. What's more, *PsiWin 2's* built-in file conversion



Exploring your Psion: PsiWin 2 extends Windows Explorer so you can manage your Series 5 just like any PC drive

ILLUSTRATION: ANDY MARTIN



Safe as houses: using PsiWin 2 to backup a Series 5. You can see exactly which files are copied to the PC

can analyse and convert appropriately any file copied to the PC. If you have not already defined a default conversion format, *PsiWin 2* offers a choice, or you can elect to have no conversion. File formats supported include word processors and spreadsheets included in Microsoft Office, Lotus SmartSuite, Corel Office (WordPerfect), and dBASE.

Note that the recent release, *PsiWin 2.1*, adds more choice for conversion and synchronisation, and later on Psion is planning to add file synchronisation. This will keep track of which files exist on both the PC and the Series 5, and works in the 'background' to keep them synchronised, copying changes made on one system onto the other (see also panel, *PsiWin upgrades and futures*).

PsiWin 2 includes an upgrade facility for Series 3 and Siena users moving to a Series 5

True Agenda synchronisation was already included in the first version of *PsiWin 2* for the most popular PC diary programs, Lotus Organizer 2.1 97 and Microsoft Schedule+ 7, synchronising events, anniversaries, appointments, to-do lists and repeats.

Some Psion users don't see the need for this, arguing that it's easier to keep your Psion handy, rather than learn a separate piece of software for the PC. But while a standalone handheld computer is fine for individual use, many of us work in teams with access to PC group scheduling software. This is where the Series 5 scores highly, as it can synchronise with a group diary on a network, too. (*Note that the Series 3c also has this capability, using PsiWin 1.1 and a separate synchronisation program – Editor*)

PsiWin 2 can recognise individual Series 5s, as each has a unique serial number. You can connect several Series 5s to a single PC and they can all have individual set-ups. For example, for each Series 5 you connect, up to 15 different synchronisation tasks can be defined with any of the supported PC schedulers (such as one for private, another for to-dos with a project schedule).

To maintain privacy on the Series 5, entries can be set as private or defined in the set-up so that they are never copied on to the PC – there's even an option which tells *PsiWin 2* to synchronise appointments which occur only in working hours, to avoid giving colleagues free access to details of your life outside the office.

Backups and printing

PsiWin 2 is also vital for backups, copying the contents of the Series 5, or just individual files and folders, to the PC to guard against theft or data loss. Old backups can also be archived, and the program 'remembers' when the last backup was carried out. Storing backups on a network also allows them to be accessed from other PCs.

Also on the integration front, *PsiWin 2* can be used to install PC TrueType fonts on to the Series 5 and print directly to any printer connected to your PC or its network. Printing is then simple: tell the Psion to 'print via PC', and everything is done in the 'background'.

The Series 5 cannot actually directly control a PC or network, but it can log into systems remotely using a terminal emulator program or via the free Web browser (see review on p12). Psion is investigating a remote synchronisation facility for *PsiWin 2*, which will allow users to keep up-to-date without being at their PC.

Moving on up

And last but not least, *PsiWin 2* also allows Series 3 or Siena users to move to a Series 5. First, all the files on the older Psion are copied and converted to Series 5 files, including those on SSDs; then the data is downloaded to the Series 5. So it's easy to upgrade to a Series 5 and keep your current files.

Options for Psion users

PsiWin 2 is included with the Series 5. The first release, *PsiWin 2.0*, has synchronisers for Lotus Organizer 2.1, 97 and Microsoft Schedule+ 7, and the serial cable is also included. The software runs under Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0. *PsiWin 1.1* is available to support file conversion and scheduling operations on the Siena and Series 3c. Synchronising software for Series 3c and Siena users is available from third-party suppliers. Series 5 users with a Macintosh can use Psion *MacConnect*, while *PsiMac* is available for the Series 3a/3c and Siena. See the review of *PsiMac* in *Psion User* Summer 1997, or visit Psion's Web site.

PsiWin upgrades and futures

PsiWin 2.1 for the Series 5 is now available. It is available both as a free download from Psion's Web site (http://www.psion.com), and is 'in the box' with all new Series 5s. Among the new features:

- Support for Microsoft Outlook
- Contacts synchronisation with Microsoft Schedule+ 7/7a/7.5; Microsoft Outlook 97; and Lotus Organizer 2.1 97
- Automatic synchronisation on connecting with the PC
- New converters: Word 97 and Excel 97 (in Office 97); Corel WordPerfect 8.0 and Quattro Pro 8.0 (in WordPerfect Suite 8); Series 5 Sketch to and from bitmap; Series 5 Sound to and from Windows WAV; Series 5 Word to and from Series 3 Word; and Series 5 Sheet to and from Series 3 Sheet

During 1998, Psion plans to make more features available as downloads from the Web, such as:

- Additional converters for the latest office suites
- File synchronisation
- Additional synchronisers for more PC schedulers

Better by **design**

Psion has always been at the forefront of design innovation. David Redhead traces the evolution of its product range, from the first Organiser handheld to the sleek and powerful Series 5

The mercurial French designer Philippe Starck once told me that he dreamt up his sculptural toothbrush sitting in an airport departure lounge and sketched it on the back of an envelope in two minutes flat. But not all good designers are maverick geniuses, as the case of Martin Riddiford proves. Riddiford, Psion's chief design consultant for 14 years, cheerfully admits that neither whimsical curves nor instant solutions are his forte. 'I'm the opposite of the designer hero. I like things to look as simple as possible,' he says.

Riddiford, who admits to being 'a bit of a Meccano man', believes good design means getting your hands dirty. 'I don't believe that my job ends when I've come up with an idea. I couldn't just hand a drawing over to my client and expect them to make it work. I spend lots of time in the workshop because I have a passion for production. I want to ensure that good ideas become good products.'

Riddiford's no-nonsense approach to his craft clearly suits Psion. Since 1983, he has designed all five machines in the Psion series, first while working for Frazer Design and now through Therefore, the product consultancy he runs with fellow director, Graham Brett, and whose clients also include NEC, Siemens and toy company Hasbro. In that time, he has overseen the evolution of the Psion from a basic organiser back in the early 1980s to the powerful device it has become in the 1990s.

Today the classic Psion form – a miniature folding 'clamshell' – has become so familiar that it's easy to forget how different things were when Psion made its debut on the scene in the mid-1980s. When Psion's chairman, David Potter, first approached Riddiford with a concept for an electronic diary in 1983, he had a good idea of the kind of people it might appeal to. Charles Davies, now Psion Computer's managing director, remembers: 'We asked the designers who pitched for the job to create a product with a typical "Psion user" in mind. He or she was aged 25-35, in middle to senior management, innovation-conscious, with lots of contacts and a complicated life to organise.'

Psion had already developed the software for its portable electronic diary, including spreadsheet, word processor and database functions. The name had also been decided. 'We settled on "Organiser" because it explained exactly what the machine could do,' says Davies.

The trouble was that nobody knew exactly what the product should look like. Riddiford was convinced of one thing, though: the size had to be right. 'Initially people thought the Organiser should be A5-sized because that was the size of the circuit board,' he recalls. 'My idea was that by splitting the board in two and stacking the two pieces on top of each other you could halve "the footprint" and make something that would fit in your pocket.'

Psion agreed, and within a year, the first Psion Organiser was on sale. It came in the form of a compact telescopic block, with a screen and keyboard that slid away into a protective sleeve. The keys were in alphabetical order because, as Riddiford says, 'no one imagined that you'd be doing much typing on it'.

To our modern eyes, the boxy, oblong form of the original Organiser looks dated but, as Psion had hoped, the machine scored highly on 'yuppie' appeal and was quickly named 'the electronic Filofax' by the press. As important for the young company was its success in industry. 'One of the unexpected things about the early Psion was that it scored really well with commerce,' says Riddiford. 'Companies such as Marks & Spencer found it ideal for keeping an instant record of stock levels.'

The healthy 'industrial' sales of the product – over a million of the original Organiser and its successor, the Organiser II have been sold (and the line is still going strong) – gave the team precious breathing space and time to consider how they could broaden its appeal.

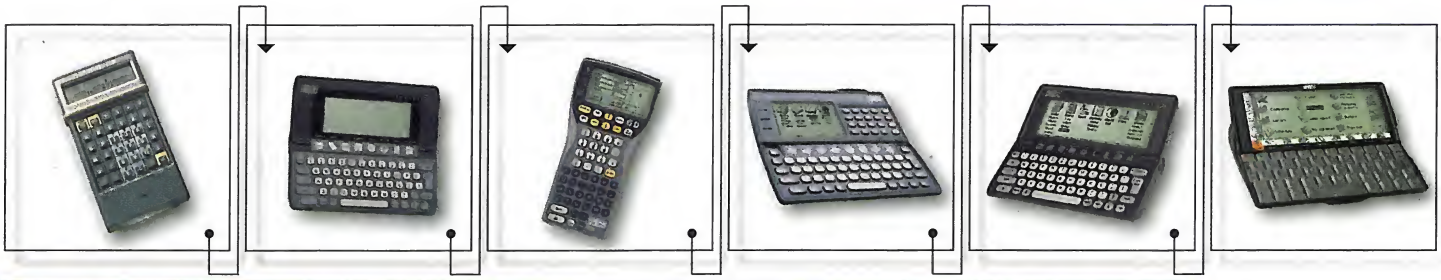
By the end of the 1980s, Psion had evolved the brief for a new improved Organiser which they presented to Riddiford. 'They were convinced that if it were split into two, with a screen in one part and a QWERTY keyboard in the other, it would reach a lot more people as it would be so much easier to understand and use,' he says. In a week, he built a model around the new concept.

The Organiser scored highly on 'yuppie' appeal and was quickly named the 'electronic Filofax'

The key to the design, as he saw it, was what you did with the bulky batteries. 'The only way to keep the Psion's form slim was to put the batteries in its spine,' explains Riddiford. 'So I came up with the idea of the double hinge. Now when you open the machine, the batteries flip out of the way and simultaneously form a support that tips the screen toward you.'

When the Series 3 hit the shops, its reception proved that Riddiford's clamshell mechanism was a masterstroke. The double hinge may have been the best way of solving a practical space problem, but anyone who has handled one will know that the cunning way it works – snapping neatly into action position and shutting with a businesslike little clunk – adds to its appeal. 'It's intended be as simple as possible because that's how I like design to be,' he says. 'But I

Chief architect: Therefore's Martin Riddiford has led the design of the entire Psion product family



Psion line-up

1983: Organiser *The Organiser did not look much like the 'clamshells' that have since become the firm's design trademark. Instead, its form was boxy, with a screen and keyboard that slid telescopically into a protective sleeve. The machine was a big hit with both commercial users, who found it invaluable as a data gathering tool, and the yuppies of the 1980s. The Organiser II is still in production today.*

1991: Series 3 *Psion introduced the distinctive 'clamshell' form with the Psion Series 3 in the early 1990s. The practicality of the design helped transform attitudes to portable computing. In 1992, the Series 3 won a design award from Britain's Design Council.*

1995: Workabout *The curvy successor to the Organiser and HC industrial handheld ranges is in widespread use, and comes in various versions.*

1996: Siena *Small enough to fit into a shirt pocket, the Siena was launched at the same time as the 3c.*

1997: Series 5 *The vast increase in computing power is matched by improvements to the machine's features. The Series 5 has been chosen as a Millennium Product by the UK Design Council.*

hope it works in a way that intrigues you and draws you into using it.' Riddiford's preference for straightforward 'form-follows-function' design is echoed by Charles Davies. 'Our products must be simple' is a phrase that comes up with mantra-like regularity in conversation with him.

Sometimes, indeed, listening to Davies and Riddiford is almost like listening to the same voice. After more than a decade working together, it seems that designer and client now share an instinctive feel for what Psion design should stand for. 'When you've worked with a designer for years, you don't go down blind alleys as we did when we first started,' explains Davies. 'By the time we began work on the Siena [see above], everyone on the team understood each other so well that we had practically decided what form it would take by the end of the first meeting.'

The relationship has certainly proved productive. As well as the Siena, Therefore and Psion have also developed the Workabout, a machine tailored to the needs of industrial users, and which has become widely used in a range of applications (see *Business User* p27, for examples). But the team's greatest triumph remains the Series 3. Since it hit the shops six years ago, in excess of 1.5 million have been sold.

Last year, Psion faced the task of building on this success by adding a new top-end product to suit the emerging 'mobile office' market. Davies says the Series 5 fits the bill. He argues that advances to the software amount to another leap in portable computing. 'We've got a completely new engine: a 32-bit rather than 16-bit microcomputer. This means the machine is ten times more powerful,' he says. 'Unless the design of the Series 5 improves as much as the processor power, then you have an unbalanced product.'

So what has Psion done to ensure that the Series 5 meets the high expectations raised by a machine capable, among other things, of scanning images, reproducing graphics and recording long conversations? According to Riddiford, the first step has been to take a long look at existing products and to listen to customer feedback – and the desire to have a bigger keyboard has been top of the list. 'We felt we had to find a way of squeezing a proper keyboard into the Series 5,' he says. Looking at the smooth exterior of the Series 5 – which is only marginally larger than the Series 3 – it's hard to believe there could be room for many changes inside. Open it up though and out slides a full-scale keyboard within which there seems scarcely a millimetre of wasted space. 'Existing keyboard technology didn't allow us to do what we wanted, so we invented a new key system,' says Riddiford in a matter-of-fact way.

The screen has been transformed too, now boasting as many pixels across as a standard computer screen. Add the 'stylus' interface – effectively a mini-mouse and electronic pencil – and you have a product that even purists now admit is a full-blown, handheld computer. Even so, the Series 5 still seems robustly portable and retains Psion's usual attention to detail. This is a company, you sense, that has learnt through experience what people expect from its products. During my road test, I noticed the new 'rolling shutter' that stops the batteries from bouncing out of their compartment; the extra-long pen ('much less tiring to use' says Davies); and the 'fridge-switch' which switches off the Series 5 when you close it.

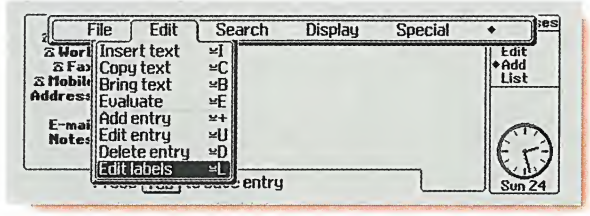
Above all, there's the new hinge design. 'People might wonder why Martin found it necessary to redesign a hinge that worked so well,' says Davies. 'It's when you use the pointer that you understand. Other products tip over when you try to use a touch-screen pointer, but Martin rethought the Series 3 hinge so that the Series 5 keeps its stability however hard you press on the screen.'

Such touches may help to make the Series 5 as much of a benchmark for Psion as the Series 3 has been. But one thing is certain – if it does prove a success, Psion's design team will not be tempted to rest on its laurels. 'Psion has a big edge on the competition, but more people than ever are developing handheld computers,' says Davies. 'We won't be complacent. We will continue to develop designs that start from first principles.' It sounds as though Martin Riddiford will be spending plenty more hours poring over models in his workshop over the next few years.

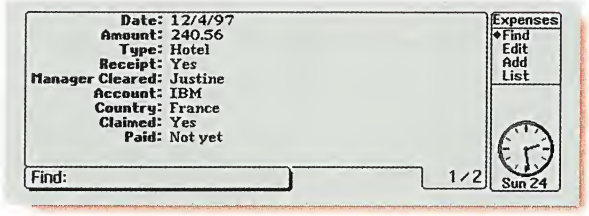
David Redhead is editor of Design, *the magazine of the British Design Council. Therefore: 2 Huntsworth Mews, London NW1 6DD, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 171 723 8322.*

Winning **entry**

There's much more to Data on the Series 3 than storing names and addresses. Mark Whitehorn reveals the potential of this killer application



Screenshot 1: selecting the Edit labels option from the main Menu in the Data application



Screenshot 2: once you have selected your new labels, you can begin to enter data

All Psions since the original Series 3 have come with a database application called Data. Clearly, this has been designed to store contact information and comes with labels such as 'Name:', 'Address:' and so on.

Of course, even in a simple contact database, everyone wants to store different information. I may want to store home phone numbers, while you need to store company names – and we both may need to record email addresses. So why hasn't Psion given us all these other labels?

The answer is that the company has done much better than that: Data is a true database management system. It allows you to modify the contact database in any way that you choose. It also allows you to create entirely new databases for storing other information, such as work-related expenses, personal accounts and travel arrangements.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW FOSTER OF MONSTER

Let's take a simple example to illustrate just what Data can do. Suppose you want to create a database for storing information about your work-related expenses (surely one of the most important databases you could create...).

Assuming that the Data application is open, choose *File*, *New file* from the menu (or simply press the *Psion-N* keys keys simultaneously), give it a name (EXPENSES) and press *Enter*. The Psion then creates a default set of labels for you – this will vary according to which Psion model you are using.

To change the labels choose *Menu*, *Edit*, *Edit labels* (or *Psion-L* as a short cut). See screenshot 1. You may want to keep some of the labels and delete or replace others – in this case, simply use the normal edit and cursor keys to make the changes you need.

To create an expenses database, you probably don't want to keep any of the default labels. You can delete them all by pressing the *Shift*, *Psion* and *down arrow* keys simultaneously, followed by the *Delete* key. Then you can add the labels that you think will be useful. (As an aside for Series 3a users, there can be occasions when you don't want any labels in a database – see panel, *Labels off*.) The labels you choose are up to you; the ones shown are only suggestions.

Once you have defined the labels that you want, press *Tab* to save them, and enter your data (screenshot 2). It is as simple as that. You can create as many databases as you like, and store whatever information you like. It's great – so good, in fact, that if you're anything like me, you will immediately want to do more with this versatile tool. One question springs to mind: how can I import and export data to and from a Psion database?

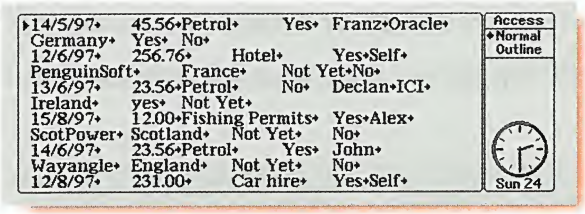
Import-export

PsiWin, the software you use to backup your data to a PC, can move files to and from a PC and can also convert file types. If you want to move information between Psion Data and ACT!, dBASE, FoxPro or Lotus Organizer, for example, PsiWin is the best bet.

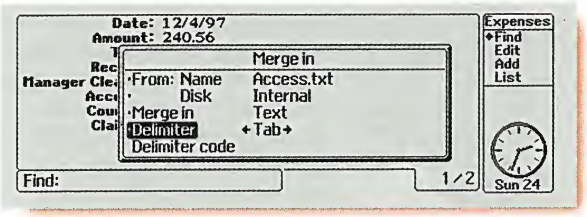
PsiWin also allows you to convert Psion Data files into 'Tab Separated Text' (TST) format, which is very handy for moving data to applications that are not supported by PsiWin, such as Microsoft Access (for more on TST, see panel, *What is Tab Separated Text?*).

Access (and many other programs) can also save data in TST format. Once a file has been copied to the Psion you can merge the data into a Psion database. Suppose you have an expenses database in Access which stores the same sort of information as your Psion expenses file. Instruct Access to save the information as TST and then use PsiWin to move the file to the Psion. At this point, you can use Psion Word to examine the file, in which case it would look something like this (screenshot 3). If you do look at the data in this way, it is safest to exit Word without saving – *Menu*, *Special*, *Exit*, *lose changes* (or *Shift-Psion-X*).

All you do then is open the existing expenses database in Data and select *Menu*, *File*, *Merge in* (or *Psion-M* for short) and select the imported file by using the arrow keys.



Screenshot 3: looking at Tab Separated Text using Word. It's an easy way to move data to and from PCs



Screenshot 4: merging in data in TST form to an existing database on your Psion

Then choose *Merge in: Text* and *Delimiter: Tab* (see screenshot 4). The extra records will appear in the database. Exporting data is simply a reversal of this operation. Psion's Data program saves in TST format if you use *Menu*, *Save as*, and select *Save as Text*, *Delimiter: Tab*, and provide a file name for the exported data.

Dialling from Data

Your Series 3a/3c can dial telephone numbers from Data by emitting DTMF tones: these are the beeps you hear when dialling from your telephone's keypad. Choose an entry in the database, place the cursor on the line containing the number to dial and press *Psion-Help* (see screenshot 5). To dial the number, press *Tab*. If you need to dial out from a company switchboard (say by adding a leading 9 to the number), press *Enter*. Or you can type in a number by pressing the *Menu* key. The Psion's speaker must be held close to the mouthpiece of the phone for this to work smoothly, but a practice run will give you the knack.

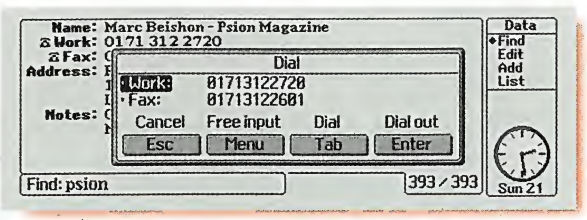
You can also set up the dial-out facility from the System menu. Select the *Control* pop-down menu, then choose *Dialling*; in the *Dial* settings dialog, set the *Dial out code* (say 9). A comma after the 9 gives a pause between the broadcast of the code and the main number.

Did you know you can add the telephone symbol (used in Data's own labels) to labels of your own design? From the Data menu, select *Edit* and *Edit labels* (*Psion-L* for short). Make any changes to the text, place the cursor where the symbol is to appear and press the *Shift-Psion-Help* keys simultaneously. Press *Tab* to save changes to the labels.

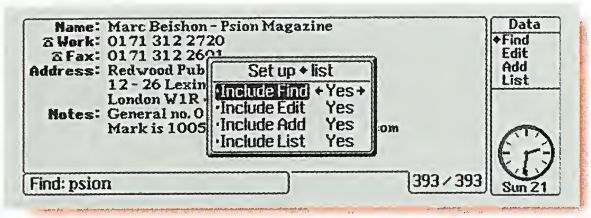
Diamond options

An important feature of Data is the use of the *Diamond* key, which allows you to move between the different views of your database, such as finding and adding entries. You can customise these options to reflect the way you work with a particular database. To do this, ensure you are in *Find* mode, and from the *Menu*, choose *Diamond* and *Set up diamond list* (*Shift-Psion-diamond*). Then you can include or exclude each of the options – on the Series 3a they are *Find*, *Change* and *Add*; on the Siena and Series 3c they are *Find*, *Edit*, *Add* and *List* (see screenshot 6).

So you can customise the list to suit the day-to-day work with the database. If you are mainly adding new entries, the *Find* and *Add* options are best. If you have a stable set of entries that need occasional editing, the *Find* and *Change/Edit* selections are more appropriate.



Screenshot 5: the options for dialling telephone numbers directly from your database



Screenshot 6: setting up the view options for Data. Note that the Series 3a has no List view

Labels off

The Series 3c comes with Jotter, an application which is ideal for recording unstructured data – jottings such as shopping lists and personal notes – which can then be stored and searched.

Series 3a and Siena users don't have Jotter, but can create similar unstructured files using Data. This is done simply by creating a database without any labels. In fact, you can store more than 4,000 characters per entry in Data (the actual number depends upon the number of lines that you include which contain more than 255 characters).

Although Data doesn't provide the same ways of manipulating entries as Jotter, an unlabelled database is still an excellent repository for notes that you'd like to keep in some kind of order. To see how to create a simple Jotter style database, see the page on Siena software (p26).

What is Tab Separated Text?

Most programs understand a range of 'lowest common denominator' formats which they can use to exchange data, one of which is Tab Separated Text. This means that it should always be possible to transfer data between different programs, even when a specific conversion program isn't available.

The Tab Separated Text format simply writes each record on a separate line. Each piece of information within the record is written as text and separated from the next piece with a Tab. The disadvantage of using TST is that all of the data is treated as text, and so you will lose the specific formatting which databases sometimes apply to data – for example, dates are often formatted so that they can be manipulated elegantly (to find the number of days between different dates, say). This doesn't matter too much because, essentially, the Psion Series 3 models and the Siena treat all data as text. (However, the Series 5 can apply such formatting – see also 'Office moves', our feature on using PsiWin 2 with the Series 5, p14.)

Playing *safe*

Your Psion is a powerful computer and, just like the biggest mainframe machine, its data must be treated with respect. Mark Whitehorn tells you why – and how

Which is worth more: your Psion, or the data it contains? Much as I love the svelte little oblong that shares my life, for me the answer has to be the data. Ignoring replaceable programs (such as various commercial software and shareware), my Psion currently contains around 400 entries in the contacts database; three articles (including this one); six letters; mortgage calculations (I'm moving house); my agenda; and my expenses.

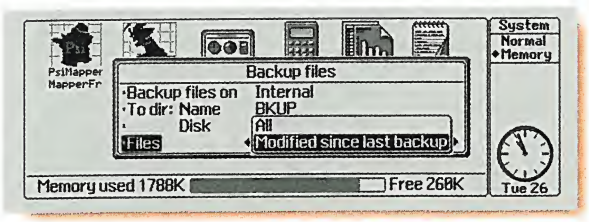
Estimated time to replace: say, 100 hours or more. Even at a low rate of pay per hour that makes the data more valuable than the Psion; your time may well be worth more than mine, so the same is almost certainly true for you. And it gets worse, because losing data is often more costly than it first appears, as some is time-dependent. Sure, I could rewrite lost articles, but I would miss the deadlines, damaging my reputation in the eyes of waiting editors.

Let's put the question again: which would I rather lose, my Psion or the data it contains? Answer, the data it contains. Why? Because the data in my Psion is not the only copy: it is backed up to the hilt. All of your Psion files can be protected with remarkable ease – it is simply a matter of choosing the most convenient option (see panel).

Backing up is easy and cheap, so how frequently should you do it? Once a week? Once a day? The answer is, of course, to use your common sense. A rapidly changing agenda should be backed up once a day; on holiday, once a week should be more than enough.

Incidentally, your Psion is smart enough to keep track of which files have been modified since a backup was last performed. This means that, once you have carried out a full backup, you can save time by choosing to backup only those files that have been changed. From the *File* menu on the *System* screen, choose *Backup files*, then *Modified since last backup* (see screenshot – applies to Series 3a/3c and Siena).

So do I practise what I preach with my Series 3c? I have PsiWin on my work PC and a Psion cable permanently attached to one of the serial ports. Backup is simply a matter of plugging in my Psion and switching on the comms link – from the *System* screen, press *Menu*, choose *Special*, then *Communications*, select *Link cable* at the required speed, and press *Enter* (note: *Communications* is called *Remote link* on the 3a). Then I can start the backup from the PC.



Safety in mind: using the Backup files option to select only those files changed since the last backup

Backup options

PsiWin

PsiWin is surely the most useful extra you can buy – one of its benefits is it makes backing up to a PC very easy. If you have a PC, this has to be the best way of securing your data against loss. Mac users can buy PsiMac for their Series 3.

Solid state disks

By default, the Psion applications store files in the internal memory. You can copy these files to SSDs if you use a Series 3 or Siena (for the Siena you need the external SSD drive). There are two types of SSD: RAM and Flash. You can use the same strategy with each type of disk: do a full backup to the SSD, then backup only those files that have been modified. When the disk is full, reformat the disk and do another complete backup. Note that the Flash SSD does not allow new copies of files to overwrite existing ones, so it will fill up faster than a RAM SSD. And don't leave a backup SSD in your Psion – both the Psion and the SSD could disappear in the hands of a thief.

Series 5 options

The Series 5 comes with a slot for a CompactFlash disk, a high-capacity device that is ideal for backing up your data if you do not have access to a PC. When you buy a Series 5, you get PsiWin 2, which automatically senses your Psion when you connect it to the PC, and prompts you to backup any files that have been modified since the last connection. Series 5 users with a Macintosh can use MacConnect.

Infrared

The Series 3c and the Siena have infrared communication ports which allow you to transfer files between different machines. This is not a true backup method, but is useful for single files.

Floppy disk drive

The Cyclone plug-in floppy disk drive, from Purple Software, works with the Series 3a/3c and the Siena. This is a good choice for those without a PC because you can also use the floppy for loading programs and data. Purple Software: +44 171 387 7777.

Road *show*

What's new in software for the Series 3a/3c? On this page, we describe new commercial programs; overleaf, there's our usual shareware bulletin

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW FOSTER OF MONSTER

Route Planner

One of the most popular types of software program for the Series 3a/3c is route planning and mapping software – the main examples being Microsoft's *Autoroute Express* and *Automap Road Atlas* (for the UK and US, now discontinued), and Steve Litchfield's *Mapper* shareware. Now Dutch developer Palmtop has introduced *Route Planner* (formerly known as *En Route*), for the Series 3a/3c/5.

Route Planner for the Series 3a/3c is available in four country 'combinations'. These are UK and Ireland; France and Switzerland; Germany and Austria; and the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). What's more, the program automatically senses what language your Psion understands and runs in English, German, French, Dutch or Italian.

Route Planner offers similar facilities to *Autoroute*, namely the ability to plot the quickest, shortest or preferred route to your destination. This can be displayed in graphical map format or as a table of route instructions – or in both formats, side by side. *Route Planner* can help you navigate around known troublespots, such as closed and busy roads, and has a good choice of configuration options.

Palmtop has also brought out *Route Planner* for the Series 5: this is available in two versions on CD-ROM. These cover Europe and North America – rather large chunks of territory, but no problem for the Series 5.

Memovoc-3

An application that can't fail to be noticed is *Memovoc-3*, a voice recording program that makes full use of the Series 3's sound capabilities. The best feature of *Memovoc* is voice-activated recording – you actually talk directly to your Psion to start recording a voice memo. Just say 'record' in a slightly raised voice with your mouth near the microphone and, after a beep, you can begin your voice note; the memo duration can be specified beforehand. *Memovoc* is produced by Irish firm Estuary Technologies.

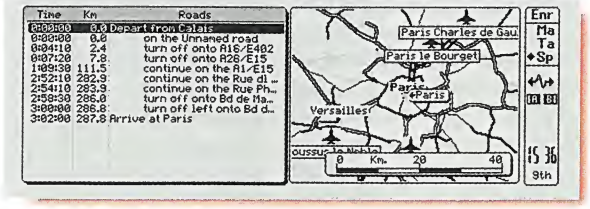
NotePad Deluxe/Banker

Pelican Software is a US developer active in the Psion market. Among others, it has produced *NotePad Deluxe*, a commercial release of *NotePad*, which was one of the most popular items of Psion shareware. *NotePad Deluxe* (distributed in Europe by Purple Software in English and in German by PSIOlogic) offers a way of linking notes to different applications – say to a Sheet file, or a contact in Data. Pelican describes it as a 'free-form notetaker for organising projects and ideas'. Pelican also offers *Banker*, a personal accounts manager, which is now in its second version. The company is now planning to launch *Banker Pro*, which adds a number of new features.

Soccer Manager

You can now manage your favourite team through an entire season on your Psion with *Soccer Manager*, from the Artamedia Partnership. The game supports all four main British divisions and cups, with player statistics, team formations, transfers and game tactics. There are even sound effects. French, German and Italian leagues to come this year – plus a Series 5 version.

Estuary Technologies tel: +353 87 234 1693; email: estuary@compuserve.com **Palmtop** fax: +31 20 446 9496; http://www.palmtop.nl **Pelican Software** tel: +1 281 242 8928; http://www.pelicansoft.com **PSIOlogic** tel: +49 6051 470065; http://www.psiologic.com **Purple Software** tel: +44 171 387 7777; http://www.purplesoft.com **The Artamedia Partnership** tel: +44 181 230 5269; sales@artamedia.com

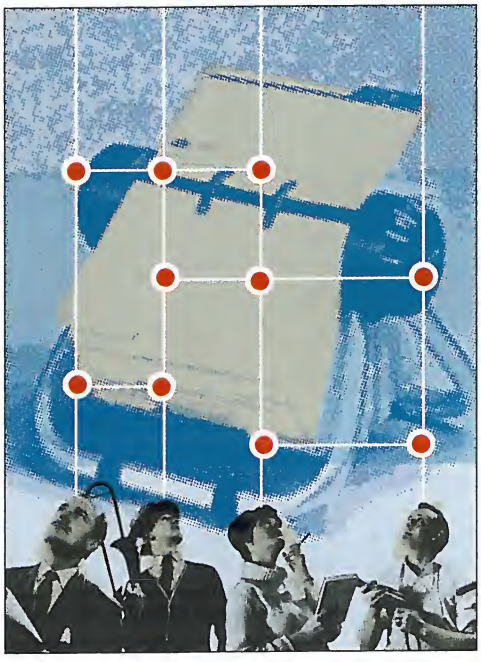


Way forward: Route Planner is the latest road map software – with versions for the Series 3a/3c and 5

Pitching in: can you do better than Arsenal's boss and pick a superior formation with Soccer Manager?

Program *notes*

The shareware scene for the Series 3a/3c is as busy as ever. Steve Litchfield provides his usual round-up of the latest programs on offer for Series 3a/3c users, with a special focus this time on contact managers and music programs



ILLUSTRATIONS: ANDY MARTIN

One of the longest lived Psion shareware stars has recently been significantly upgraded. Rick Andrews' shareware painting package *Draw* now supports serial, parallel and infrared printing on a range of printers. With PsiWin on the PC and *Draw* on the Series 3c, you really can do graphics-related work away from your desk. *Draw* isn't the only painting package available as shareware, and it's worth trying others too before making a choice.

To help you get going with graphics, several talented artists have made their personal collections of Psion artwork available for the rest of us to use. Both Neil Bee and Phil Creed have produced several hundred public domain icons for use in your own System screen and programs – visit the 3-Lib shareware library to obtain the icons (see panel, *Shareware essentials*).

Have you ever changed a file only to find out later that it appears to still be in its original state? One possibility is that you have two or more copies of the same file kicking around, causing confusion and wasting precious disk space. John Boyce's freeware *JBDupes* can help. This scans all files on all disks and then shows the duplicates, offering to view or delete them.

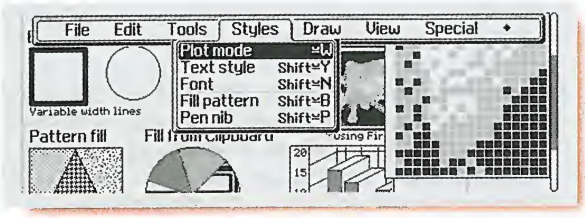
Another free utility from the Boyce stable is *JBActive*, an advanced 'shell' for the Series 3c which offers the ability to keep track of running programs, backlight control and application launching.

Keeping track of time as you work on several different projects used to be a major hassle. The freeware program *WorkLog*, from Richard Schmidt, helps greatly by automating the recording of time information. It both organises the data and allows you to present it either on the Psion or in a file that you can export to other applications. In a similar vein is Ronald Queloz's *Vacation Tracker*, also freeware, which helps managers keep tabs on the annual leave situation for each of their employees.

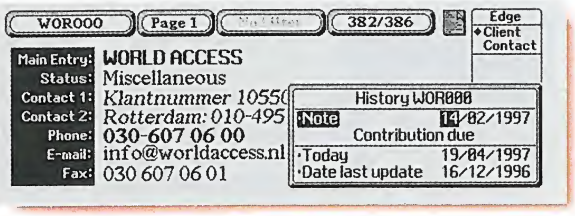
One of the most popular shareware games continues to be Matt Millar's *Backgammon*, which goes from strength to strength and which pushes the computing power of the Series 3c's processor to the utmost.

Also stretching the Psion's mettle is the oddly-named *NFSC* freeware VT100 terminal emulator. If you don't know what a VT100 is then you probably don't need it, but for those of us working in the computer industry this handy utility is a godsend. Speaking of whom, Storm Technologies is obviously tuned in to the Almighty with an improved version of its freeware *Bible Reader*.

It's worth noting that most, if not all, of the programs above were written using the built-in OPL programming language, testifying to the power and ease of use of Psion's creation. If you haven't tried programming before, then OPL is an excellent place to start; I can guarantee you'll never be bored on a plane or train journey ever again.



Graphics master: Draw is an updated painting package with a range of printing options



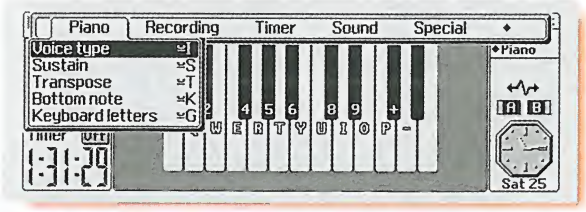
Keep in touch: Contact Edge started life as a commercial program, and is now offered as shareware

Contact managers

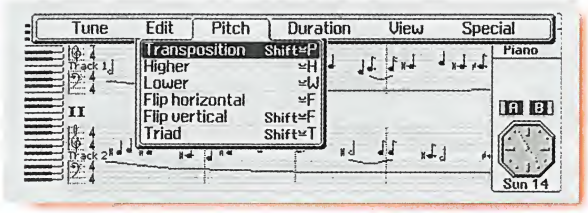
One area where the shareware world has seen an explosion of new offerings is contact management. This is the art of integrating the names, addresses and numbers of your contacts with your schedule of meetings with them. A good contact manager also allows the recording of notes made in meetings and telephone calls.

There have been such a variety of approaches to handling these requirements that all I can do is point you towards several of the current favourites as a starting point in your search. Ad Bosch's freeware *Contact Edge* is remarkable, partly because it's free and partly because of its origins as commercial software before being taken over and improved for shareware release.

Tony Crocker's shareware *PsiTact* is a good bet for its



Piano forte: Musicbox is a complete musician's toolkit that includes a playable keyboard



Note perfect: MusicPoc Professional is a powerful musician's tool that is still evolving

impressive integration of the different Psion applications. Lastly, Paul Law's shareware *Contact Log* approaches things from a different angle, making the meeting or call notes the centrepiece and linking the rest of the program to that function.

Tuning in

Most musicians know only too well that they need to cart around tuners, chord books, metronomes and general gizmos that are the stock in trade of their profession. Given that they might be carrying a Psion anyway, it makes a lot of sense to offload some of the gadgetry into its capable hands. I've been trying a few of the various music-related programs that are available.

Berthold Daum's *MusiPoc Professional* is aimed at the serious musician, offering transcription facilities and a host of functions including MIDI import and export; please check that you get an up-to-date version as this program is still evolving.

Graham Brand's *Chord* impressed me, as a guitar player, with its chord databases, search functions and built-in string tuner. Along the same lines, but for pianists, is Tim Kerber's *PianoHlp*, complete with a database of musical terms for registered users.

I've saved the best until last. *Musicbox*, by John Neale, is a complete musicians' toolkit. Contained in one program are a playable piano keyboard, metronome, tuner, tempo measurer and timer. There's even the facility to record the tunes you play on the keyboard.

Top ten for free

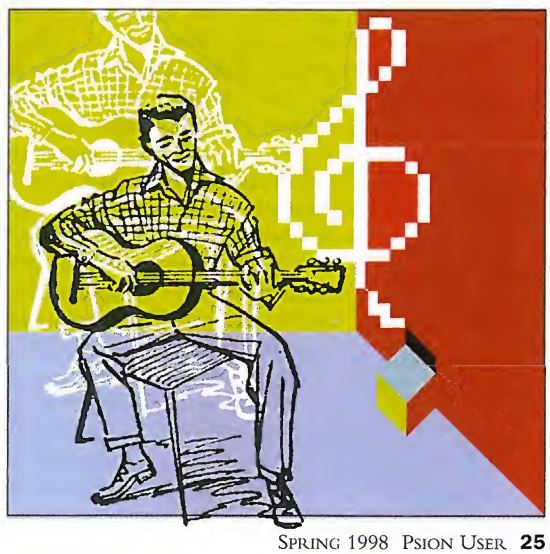
Psion users across the Internet have been voting for their favourite freeware programs for the Psion Series 3a and 3c. Here's the Top 10.

1. ***JBDATA:*** John Boyce's database sorting and listing tool. Works on any Psion database, even those created by OPL programs.
2. ***Macsys:*** Macro system. Allows the recording of commonly used keystrokes and operations in the built-in applications.
3. ***JBTree:*** File manager. Especially useful on the Series 3a, which doesn't have one built-in.
4. ***Pason:*** Password control program. Saves entering the machine password more than once a day.
5. ***3T:*** Small and simple file manager.
6. ***Contact Edge:*** Contact management system.
7. ***Psi-On:*** Another password control system, which works in a similar fashion to Pason.
8. ***Greedy:*** Monopoly-like board game, but with families of cartoon characters to collect instead of properties.
9. ***JBLaunch:*** Program launcher. Especially useful where you've amassed large numbers of third-party programs, this will stop your system screen getting too cluttered.
10. ***CALC3a:*** Scientific calculator and equation solver.

Shareware essentials

Unlike commercial software programs, typically sold by dealers or in shops, shareware is usually uploaded by its author onto the Internet and CompuServe, or distributed on floppy disk or CD-ROM. You can then download the software and try it out. If you like the program, you're obliged to pay for it; if not, you simply erase it. And some programs – referred to as freeware – are completely free of charge.

Most shareware programs take only seconds to download. You can download files to a PC first and then transfer them to your Psion using PsiWin or PsiMac. You'll also need a program such as WinZip to 'unzip' shareware that has been compressed; these files usually end in '.ZIP'. WinZip is shareware that can be downloaded from http://www.winzip.com; you just 'drag and drop' ZIP files to the WinZip icon. You can get most shareware and freeware programs from Steve Litchfield's Web site (http://3lib.ukonline.co.uk or http://www.3-Lib.co.uk), or from the Psion forum on CompuServe (GO PSION). For details by mail, send a loose first-class stamp plus stamped addressed envelope (or International Reply Coupon) to 3-Lib, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3EN, United Kingdom.



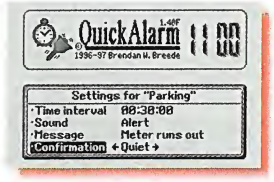
Contact *time*

Steve Litchfield reports on some of the latest shareware offerings for Psion's baby of the family, and shows you how to create a Jotter-style database for notes

Have you ever wanted to set an alarm for something in a hurry – such as a reminder that your egg is boiled or your parking meter is about to expire? Using the Time application to set alarms can be cumbersome: surely the Siena is clever enough to work out what 30 minutes from 'now' is, without needing you to tell it?

Well now it can, with Brendan Breede's freeware utility, *QuickAlarm*. This uses the System screen as the main interface. Once you have predefined common alarms that you're likely to set (such as boiling that egg or waking up after a 20-minute nap), these appear under the *QuickAlarm* icon and can be launched by simply pressing the *Enter* key. The utility does all the rest, working out the actual alarm time, and then setting it up for you in Time.

Also new is Ad Bosch's *Relate*, a shareware program. This is a rethink of the traditional contact manager. It uses Data to store the bulk of the contact information, and does not try to carry out too much itself. Contact details can be browsed or quick-searched, and each one can have a reminder or note attached. Pressing the asterisk key on any name brings up a secondary screen where contacts can be defined or edited. And there's even the facility to denote a 'primary' contact. *Relate* is small, occupying just 25KB of disk space, and it works perfectly on the Siena's smaller screen.



Just the ticket: QuickAlarm does all the calculations

Relate: a neat contact manager, ideal for the Siena

SNA Bank, Alan Richey's home accounts suite, is available for the Siena, though if you install the whole program you can say goodbye to almost half a megabyte of memory. However, he has allowed you to install just the modules you need, which can cut the space requirement considerably.

One particularly useful module, given current interest in the stock market, is an *Investment Tracker* module which allows you to record and track the progress of all your stocks, shares and portfolios. Other Siena modules are available for home budget planning, fuel economy and, of course, bank account management.

Lastly, I have two more of my own Siena offerings. *LifeGuide* is a freeware bible-based guide giving scriptures for all occasions. And *Mapper-Si/GB* is a conversion of my mapping system for Britain, running on the Siena's smaller screen. It really is amazing how much you can fit into a Siena if you really try.

More Siena information and shareware is available on the Web at http://3lib.ukonline.co.uk/ or you can get a listing by post (see the Series 3 shareware article on p25 for details). Look out too for a new Siena 'frequently asked questions' (SNFAQ.TXT) – it's on the CompuServe Psion forum. For more information about Psion's range of software and accessories for the Siena – such as Agenda Synchronizer and SSD Drive – visit Psion's Web site (http://www.psion.com) or contact your local distributor.

Get jotting on the Siena

If you own a Siena and look enviously at the Jotter application on your friend's Series 3c, you'll be pleased to learn that now you can get jotting too. The answer is to configure Data on the Siena to mimic Jotter. Here's how.

1. Move to the Data icon on the System screen.

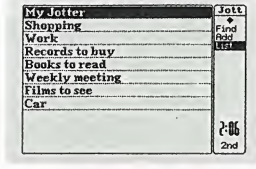
2. Press Menu, go to Special, and select Create new list (or press the Psion and E keys at the same time). Then enter \JOT as the Directory for files, and Jotter as the 'Save list as: Name' (If you want to be clever you could also make up a new icon and use that instead of the Data icon). Press Enter – the Siena asks you to confirm and creates a Jotter option on the System screen.

3. Then press the Menu key again, go to Apps, and select Assign button (Psion-A for short). This allows you to assign a button on the keypad to your Jotter – say pressing Control-Calc simultaneously, or just Calc if you don't use the calculator.

4. Open your new Jotter database, press Menu and choose Edit labels. (Psion-E for short). Delete the labels, but create two new ones, T: and N: (for Title and Notes).

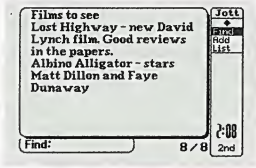
5. Enter a title name in the T: field – such as My Jotter – and press the Tab key.

6. You can now press the Diamond key to move between the different views. Go to List, press Menu, select Special and go to Set columns. Set the Width of T: to 24, and press Enter.



A list of possible Jotter titles for note taking...

7. That's it. You can now add more titles and make notes under each. You can also leave the Jotter file open. Go somewhere else on your Siena (such as Agenda). Turn the Siena off. Now press Control-Calc (or whatever you assigned) and the Siena turns on with your Jotter on display.



...and selecting the notes from one of the titles

Business User

More at http://www.psion.com

United Kingdom

A sound solution

Measuring noise and vibration levels has now become much easier, following the introduction of an innovative system based on the Psion Series 3a/3c. Developed by UK-based Industrial Noise and Vibration Centre (INVC) and available to users worldwide, the Psion Level Meter comprises specialist noise measurement hardware, a microphone, a Psion Series 3a/3c running specially written software, and PC software.

Peter Wilson, partner at INVC, says that the Psion is the ideal platform for the application, given its powerful processor and user friendly interface. 'Systems developers in this niche market simply cannot afford to develop such a sophisticated graphical interface.' Furthermore, the extended battery life of the Psion makes it well suited to remote monitoring applications, as it can be left unattended for lengthy periods.

Wilson uses the example of a health and safety officer checking noise levels in a factory to illustrate a more efficient way of working. 'Previously, he would wander around the factory taking and recording maybe 200 measurements and making notes on the factory plan. He would then write these up for the secretary back at the office, check the typed report, and incorporate the figures into the factory plan. A lengthy process, as you can imagine.

'Using the Psion Level Meter, he can simply download a database of measurement positions before leaving the office, take and record the measurements on site using the Psion, and upload the data to a PC when back in the office. This saves time, and improves accuracy.'

For more details, contact INVC on +44 1753 570044.

United States

Patently better

Managing repairs and internal moves at the US Trade and Patent Office is no small matter: the government agency has 13 offices at different sites across Virginia. In a bid to improve downtime and complete office moves more efficiently, the agency has adopted a new system based on the Psion Workabout and HC, developed with the help of AMT Associates.

The Trade and Patent Office originally used 47 Workabouts in operations where equipment and furniture were being moved; 18 HCs were also used by field engineers carrying out repairs and inventories, linked by short-range radio to base.

Now the agency is adding radio to the Workabout machines, so that the handhelds are online to the database continually. Links with a central helpdesk system mean that field service agents can be despatched quickly and automatically to install, move, repair or upgrade computers or other office equipment.

A barcode on each item is scanned using the Psion, so assets can be tracked easily, with proof of attendance.

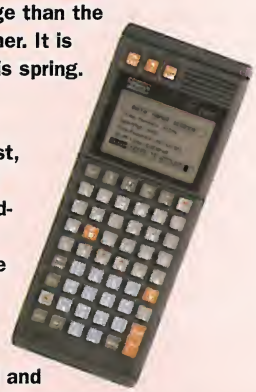
'All contractors have to arrive on site within two hours, and complete the job within four,' says George Naughton, managing director at AMT. 'Now there is concrete proof they have met these targets.'

AMT: +1 703 271 9515.

Workabout

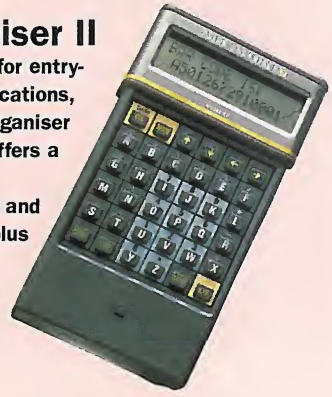
The Workabout has revolutionised mobile handheld computing across commerce and industry. Now IP54 approved, the Workabout range has 256KB and 1MB memory options, and several models are available to suit different needs. Additions to the Workabout range recently have included the Workabout Wand and Workabout Scanner, which feature an integral barcode wand and laser scanner respectively. The new CCD model (above) is the latest addition to the scanning range and is ideal for reading barcodes placed closely together (on a shelf edge or questionnaire, for example). It offers thousands of scans per single battery charge, with a lower power usage than the Workabout Scanner. It is available from this spring.

Psion HC



The HC is a robust, modular range of multitasking handheld computers, supporting a wide range of options. Memory choices range from 128KB to 512KB and file formats are DOS compatible. Weatherproof versions are available, and units with a built-in radio modem allow data transfer on the move.

Organiser II



Designed for entry-level applications, Psion's Organiser II model offers a choice of keyboards and screens, plus memory options of 32KB or 64KB.

The Netherlands

Pay as you throw

A town in the Netherlands is adopting technology that allows local authorities to charge residents living in flats for the collection of household waste. Until now it has been difficult to monitor the amount of waste generated by individual households.

Now, each household has its own contactless RF Infocard which opens an electronic lock on the communal bin. Once the lock is open, residents can dump a fixed volume of waste. Card identification, and the locking, unlocking and motor controls of the bin are managed by a Psion Workabout linked to the Infocard RF reader. The Psion also controls a list containing the card numbers of people authorised to dump their waste in a specific container. The Psion is linked by modem to the head office, and this enables the local authority to download individual registrations and to monitor the total amount of waste dumped since the container was last emptied.

For details, call Waste Sorting Systems in Baarn, tel: +31 35 542 9611.

Switzerland

Just the ticket

Swiss Landeslotterie, one of the leading lotteries in Switzerland, has equipped its team of 30 mobile workers with a Psion HC for tracking ticket sales.

Lottery fans in Switzerland can buy tickets from a variety of outlets including restaurants, shops and kiosks. Employees of the Landeslotterie visit all the outlets in their area to take orders for tickets, deliver supplies and collect unsold tickets.

The Psion HCs, running customised software developed by Comrex, act as a mobile terminal, enabling the workers to download job details and sales leads before setting out. At each site, workers input data such as the number of tickets sold and unsold, and the ticket sales turnover. This is then uploaded to a central system.

Comrex: +41 1 482 3539.

United Kingdom

A strong alliance

Eighty-six members of Alliance & Leicester's salesforce have been equipped with Psion Series 3c palmtops to help them organise their working day and increase access to information on the move. UK mortgage lender Alliance & Leicester employs a dedicated salesforce to liaise with its intermediary channel, which includes estate agents and mortgage brokers. Account managers are typically based at home, visiting clients to promote mortgage packages. They can now use the Series 3c during these meetings to access up-to-date information on mortgage repayments, lending policy and other mortgage-related costs. After the meeting, the Psion can be used to complete a report which includes details of the visit, sales made and any further actions needed. The company is now planning to implement email software for the Series 3c.

Wise decision

UK insurer Prudential has added powerful new software to the Series 3a palmtops used by 6,000 members of its salesforce. The Mobile Pages database software, licensed from Mobile Software, provides the salesforce with rapid access to large volumes of product-related information wherever they happen to be. This was previously available only on paper or by phone calls to support areas. The software also incorporates a user interface, designed to reduce the need for training. 'Last year we gave our salesforce Psions so that they could deliver quotes at the point of sale,' says Martin Symons, Prudential's national sales research manager. 'Now they can access additional information in the field, increasing efficiency and reducing support costs.' Mobile Software is running seminars on its software in London. Call +44 181 906 0002 or visit http://www.mobilepages.com

Italy

Traffic patrol goes Workabout

Visitors to the beautiful coastal resort of Cefalu in Northern Sicily may be in for a shock if they park illegally on the town's narrow streets. Its police officers are now equipped with a Workabout running specially developed software, linked to a mobile printer – and are able to deal with traffic offences much more efficiently as a result.

When faced with a traffic violation, the police simply enter the car licence plate number, the location and the traffic violation code, and a fine notification document is printed and placed on the vehicle windscreen. Information is automatically uploaded to the central system at the end of each shift via a docking station; the Workabout batteries are recharged and updated traffic regulations and/or codes are downloaded simultaneously.

The police force in Cefalu, which attracts more than 400,000 visitors each year, adopted the solution after finding it was increasingly hampered by the time spent controlling traffic, issuing parking fines and inputting data into a central computer.

Comandante Antonio Flaccomio is delighted with the increase in productivity. 'The officers now have much more time to spend on other vital aspects of police work,' he says. The officers also welcome the change, as the machine easily withstands the knocks it receives during a day's work and is far lighter to carry than a printed traffic manual.

Canada

Tracking a moving target

Psion Workabouts are being used in an innovative new system in Canada for the tracking and installing of advertisements on public transport. Urban Outdoor Trans Ad manages ad space in 60 subway stations and on 1,800 buses, trams and cars in the Toronto transit system. Before adopting the Workabout, it was difficult for Urban to preallocate and sell specific sites. Installers would have been told to post 60 different ads across 60 sites randomly, but instructions could not be more specific. Completed installations would be ticked off on paper-based forms.

'Charting installations manually was a monumental task,' recalls George Tougas, operations director at Urban. 'Now, the frame of each ad space bears a barcode which is scanned whenever an ad is installed,' he explains. Installers upload a completed work order at the end of each shift, and can simultaneously download their 'to-do list' for the following shift. The list is ticked off electronically, and the Workabout issues reminders if something remains uncompleted.

'This gives us a real competitive edge, as we can tell our clients exactly what they want to know – when and where each ad was placed, how long it took, and how many ads were installed the night before. We can give them this information on a daily basis, instead of waiting for weekly reports. And the fact that installations are validated electronically means that our credibility is never called into question.'
More information from Sage Data Solutions on +1 613 225 4404.

Germany

Pocket doctor

Publishing companies worldwide are finding alternatives to paper, as they start to offer books and magazines in electronic format. Nowhere is this trend more welcome than in medical publishing – an area renowned for its weighty and expensive reference guides.

Stuttgart-based publisher Enke Verlag now offers its* Memo Anaesthesia *reference guide in two formats: as a book, or as Psion software for the Series 3a/3c. The program, which is supplied on SSD, is already used by more than 250 physicians on their rounds, enabling them to look up quickly information on the administration of drugs, blood analysis and other medical procedures.

United Kingdom

Tax break

Working out income tax and national insurance contributions may not be exciting, but it has now become much easier for accountants and payroll professionals across the UK. QTAXPro, the tax and NI calculator from Qtac Solutions, is now available for the Psion Series 3a/3c – with a Series 5 version in the pipeline. 'Our research has shown that payroll managers need the convenience of computerised payroll calculator software, combined with the flexibility of a portable handheld computer,' says managing director, Peter Prater. 'Many accountants already use Psions in preference to a laptop.' Qtac Solutions: +44 117 970 2062.

United Kingdom

Is this a Psion I see before me?

Shakespeare's* Macbeth *was written in the 17th century, but it continues to fascinate theatre and film directors.* Macbeth, *the latest feature film, has some new stars behind the action: Psion palmtops played a key part in the filming.

Starring Jason Connery and Helen Baxendale,* Macbeth *was released last summer and has already picked up three awards at the US Film Festival in Chicago. As the film was shot entirely on location in England and Scotland, director Jeremy Freeston (pictured) knew that his Psion Series 3a would be invaluable. 'I had used the Series 3a in my previous television work, and so it was the logical choice for my first feature film,' he explains. 'The remote locations we used in Scotland – such as Blackness Castle on the Firth of Forth, and Dunfermline Abbey – meant that the crew faced logistical problems in terms of computer support. So we used Psions to store all of our scheduling, scripting and budgeting data, ruling out the need for a static production office.

'At one stage our "production office" was on the walls of Balvaird Castle and consisted of a couple of Psions, flash SSDs and mobile phones. Combine this with the stunning scenery and glorious sunshine, and the high-stress studio environment which is the norm in the film industry seemed a long way away.

'As well as using the machine for letters and faxes, I kept track of the film's screenplay in Word. I could make changes to the script whether I was on set or sitting on a castle wall. Sheet kept track of the film's budget, and we stored full crew and contact listings in Data. And Jason Connery used Autoroute Express to find his way to the Scottish locations. We couldn't have the main star getting lost.'

Map *in hand*

Surveying is a well established profession – but one where modern tools have made a major difference. Nick Langley finds out where Psions plot the lie of the land

The word 'surveying' covers a multitude of activities, and Psion is involved with most of them, from market research to carrying out housing management tasks. Far older than these, however – the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* gives an example of the word from 1551 – is the 'process or art of making surveys of land'. We may have moved from men in wigs with measuring sticks to people in yellow jackets with theodolites on tripods, but the purpose remains the same: accurate mapping of the land and its features, natural and man-made.

At the most basic level, the Psion Workabout can link to a theodolite to capture measurement data, which is later downloaded into a mapping program back at the office. Psion sells its industrial handhelds via its national partners to theodolite manufacturers around the world, including Pentax, Topcon, Leica, Carl Zeiss, Sokkia and Nikon. These suppliers have mostly written their own software to transfer data to the Workabout, and they sell the Psion device along with the theodolite.

You can also buy general packages that address the needs of land surveyors, and which even allow them to define how to link the information to a map. One such solution is *Booker*, which has been developed by Psion's South African partner, Psionet.

Craig Browne, Psionet's managing director, is a professional land surveyor. After working in computer drafting and in geographic information systems (GIS), he saw the potential of using handheld data capture devices with electronic theodolites.

In the mid-1980s, the surveying profession in South Africa was given the huge task of mapping many thousands of *'erven'* (an African word meaning small plots of ground). 'This forced a complete revaluation of how we worked in the field,' says Browne. 'Electronic data capture from theodolites came to be the standard way of working.

'Each theodolite vendor had its own data logging device. These were quite expensive and each operated slightly differently, using a different data format. For a surveying office with a range of devices, the operators would have to be trained on each one, and the data that came back had to undergo a different filtering process according to the format.'

Browne wrote an application which linked the Psion Organiser to any commercially available theodolite, with a uniform data structure. 'I sold the idea to the instrument vendors, who standardised my package and marketed it along with their electronic theodolites. It's a straightforward format, which anyone can pick up without having to use sophisticated file structures. In a short time, all the vendors of survey processing software had links to my data files.'

The package is not just a database: it also has a spread of calculation features, including coordinate conversions and standard point calculations, based on Browne's understanding of what a surveyor needs in the field.

Booker now has more than 2,000 users, and has been exported to Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, Portugal and Australia. It has also been adopted in neighbouring African countries, and is used in mining, civil engineering, railways and utilities.

The package can easily be adapted to other national markets. Coordinate systems are either left- or right-handed, depending on the hemisphere you're in; *Booker* can be configured for either.

Another package for land surveying is *CG Field Plus*, from US-based C&G Software Systems. Sold primarily in the US and Canada and, coincidentally, in certain African countries, this is another product looking for European distributors. Its GPS link has extended the program's use beyond civil engineering, mining and utilities into state and local government and the emergency services (see panel below for more information on GPS).

For more details of Booker, CG Field Plus, GEO'corder and other Psion-based solutions, contact the Psion Industrial Commercial team in the UK. Tel: +44 990 134976. Email: ind-sales@psion.com

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW FOSTER OF MONSTER

Technical fix

Global positioning systems (GPS) measure latitude and longitude using a constellation of continuously orbiting satellites. A GPS unit linked to a Workabout, for example, can fix a position or measure distance to centimetre accuracy.

GPS units can be linked to geographic information systems for inventory applications. One specialist in the integration of GPS and GIS is GEOsurv of Canada, which provides its GEO'corder software to users in 50 countries.

The company says the Workabout – and now the Series 5 – can be linked to any GPS receiver. GEOsurv also supplies a product called SAT'sitter, a mount that fits on the back of the Workabout and allows a GPS unit to be attached directly via the serial port.

Global *report*

There are some situations where portabiiity really counts. We look at how Psion computers around the world are put to remarkable use

PHOTOGRAPH: DINU LI

Picture perfect

The Long Horn Miao ethnic group has maintained its own identity and culture for 8,000 years and chooses to live in isolated mountain villages in the Guizhou Province, South West China, without electricity or running water.

Dinu Li, an award-winning photographer, is preparing a major photographic project documenting the lives of this fiercely independent group, and plans to exhibit his work at the turn of the century. The Miao children were, unsurprisingly, fascinated by Li's Series 3c.

He uses the Psion to keep a diary of his daily activities and to store the exposure details of his photographic work. 'With all the changes taking place in China, it's fascinating to see first-hand the social reality in existence today,' says Li.

Secret agenda

When Toby Follett travelled to Colombia to investigate a wave of violence engendered by the recent oil boom for a TV documentary, he took a Psion Series 3c along to use as a diary and jot down occasional notes.

'I had a schoolboy fantasy that we could use the Series 3c to keep our information secure, by copying notes on to a Psion solid state disk and hiding it in my hotel room,' explains Follett.

'My dream became reality frighteningly fast. As we got closer to uncovering some of the individuals who were behind the violence, our investigation began to turn into a very nasty Tintin story without the comfort of Snowy or Captain Haddock.

'We found ourselves acting like characters from a corny thriller, copying all our notes into my Psion each day. Soon it was packed with the names and addresses of those brave enough to reveal what was really going on. It was a great comfort to know that I had the whole story in my waist wallet, with a hidden backup on disk.'

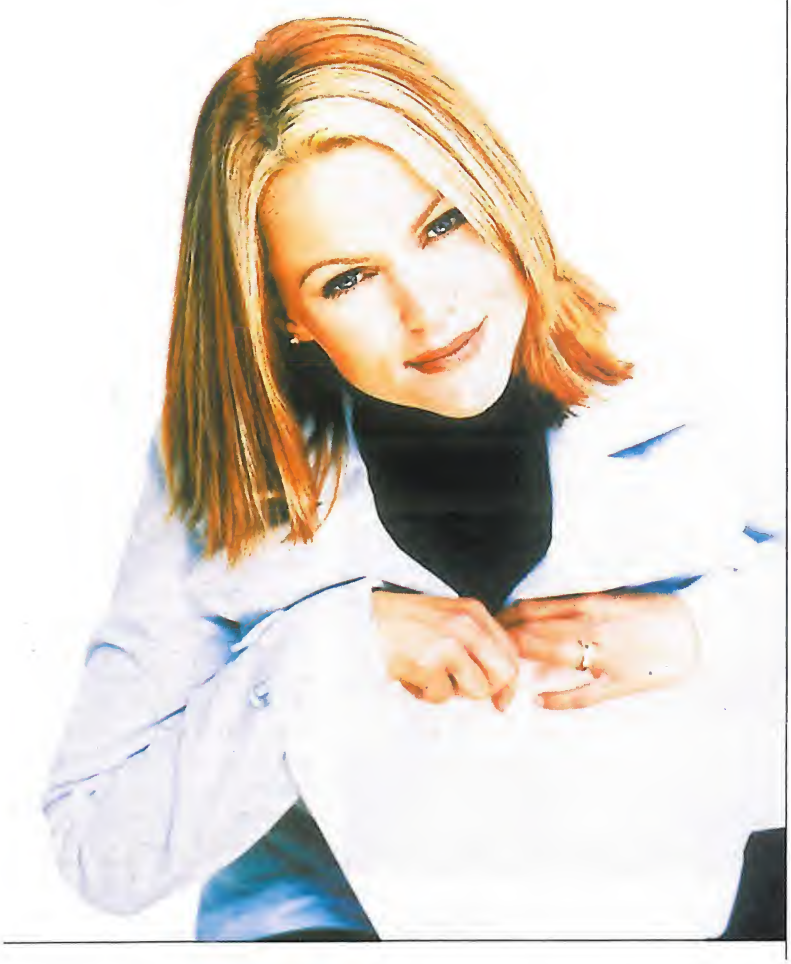
Breaking new ground

Climbers on the British Services Gimmigela Expedition were able to record details of the first British ascent of this 7,350m Himalayan peak using Series 3a palmtops. Tension was high during the expedition, which used a new approach route, and team members were forced to contend with 90mph winds and biting cold before they successfully reached the summit in May. As well as being used for diary purposes, the six Psions kept track of complex finances, and the cost and duration of satellite phone calls; they were also used with radios to track stores items such as food, fuel and climbing equipment.

'If we'd lost even one of our Psions, we would have been in real trouble,' says Major Pat Parsons, expedition leader. 'We used them for absolutely everything.'

Wired *for sound*

It's a hard life being a famous pop singer. Belinda Carlisle talks to *Psion User* about how she uses her new Series 5 to help organise her hectic schedule



Failing an audition for the school choir when she was young ('I forgot the song I was supposed to sing') hasn't stopped singer Belinda Carlisle from becoming famous around the world, with a string of albums to her name, including the latest, *A Woman And A Man*.

After singing with the Go-Gos for a couple of years in the late 1970s, Belinda went solo, launching her debut album in 1986. Her next album release, *Heaven Is A Place On Earth*, went number one worldwide and earned multi-platinum sales and a Grammy nomination.

Californian-born Belinda moved away from the US in 1994, and now lives in a Victorian home in the peaceful English countryside with her husband, film producer Morgan Mason, and young son James.

But life's still hectic when there's promotion to be done, and albums to be made – look out for her next album this summer. While in the US promoting *A Woman And A Man*, Belinda kept a diary (see panel) to show just how much she relies on her Series 5 to keep her organised.

8am – Time to get up

My second wake-up call of the day, courtesy of my new Psion Series 5, which wakes me from across the room – hotel wake-up calls are so unreliable. I always put my Psion out of arm's reach so I have to get out of bed to switch it off. That way, I know I won't just go back to sleep.

Check my Agenda to see what I'm doing today. These promo trips get so hectic and the schedule changes so often that my Psion really helps me keep up-to-date with what's going on.

No more tatty old Filofax with loads of entries rubbed out – am I the only person who always tore the page when I did that?

12pm – At the shops

The shopping in New York is absolutely the best in the world – so many great stores, so little time! I deliberately take out my Series 5 and ostentatiously check my hi-tech shopping list, calculating exchange rates on the touch-sensitive screen. This attracts much envy from my technically inferior fellow shoppers.

4pm – Press interviews

Back to the hotel for a couple of hours of press interviews – so boring! Followed by a few phone calls back to the UK. Come back to find an interviewer comparing his Casio with my Series 5.

I was totally in love with my old Series 3a and didn't think that anything would ever replace it in my affections, but without wishing to sound sycophantic this new toy is just too cool. I find the backlit screen is really useful, especially on long-haul overnight flights, as the overhead lights are always really useless.

And everyone who sees the touch screen just can't wait to get their hands on it.

8pm – Out in Manhattan

Out to dinner with Howard Stern to discuss ideas for tomorrow morning's show – though, of course, you know with Howard that he'll never stick to anything. In the car I realise that I have left my Series 5 in the hotel – where the hell was I supposed to be meeting him? Nothing else to do but go back and get it. Am I becoming overly reliant on technology?

1am – Back at the hotel

Howard is without doubt the most outrageous man on the planet – there is nothing that man won't say, very loudly and in public. Just got time to plug in my fax modem and whizz this little diary piece over to* Psion User *in the UK before I set my ever-reliable alarm for 6am and hit the sack...
Goodnight.

PHOTOS: CHRYSALIS RECORDS & REX FEATURES

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New Cyclone diskette storage solution

This new generation of the Cyclone disk drive is compatible with the Psion Siena, the Series 3a and the Series 3c. This completely redesigned unit provides users with a fast, flexible and low-cost solution to off-line storage and back-up. The package comprises the drive, Purple Software's renowned File Manager application and connection cables for compatible computers.

Backgammon & Chinese Chess for Psion Series 5

Purple Software's Backgammon & Chinese Chess twin-pack offers handheld users the highest quality strategy game-play currently available. The rich functionality includes superb graphics, a choice of screen layouts and the ability to save and load games, take back pieces, replay moves or request the computer to suggest a move. A full tutorial and the ability to set up positions of your choice make these applications ideal for both novices and advanced players alike.

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Purple Software Limited, tel: + 44 (0) 171 387 7777, fax: +44 (0) 171 387 1188, email: info@purplesoft.com, http://www.purplesoft.com

N America: New World Technologies Inc, tel: 212 941 4633, fax: 212 274 8527, email: psion@nwt.com
France: Psion France, tel: 01 53 41 12 00, fax: 01 53 41 12 01, web: www.psion-fr.com
Switzerland: Excom AG, tel: 01 782 2111, fax: 01 781 1361, email; infos@excom.ch

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